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THE CHRIST BROTHERHOOD

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BY

LOUIS ALBERT BANKS, D.D.

AUTHOR OF "THE CHRIST DREAM," "THE HEAVENLY TRADE-WINDS,' ETC.

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TO MY FRIEND,

THE REV. WILLIAM NESBIT BREWSTER,

THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY THE AUTHOR.

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THE CHRIST BROTHERHOOD.

I.

The Gold of Human Land.

"The gold of that land is good."—Gen. ii, 12.

ALL our American world has been busy talking about gold in its monetary relations. The almost universal discussion of the subject has brought to the surface a great many interesting facts about the production of that precious metal. A few years ago it was believed that gold mining would steadily decline throughout the world. The richest gold fields seemed almost exhausted, and ten years ago the whole world produced only about one hundred million dollars of the yellow metal. But there has been a revolution in gold mining within the last decade, and in 1895 over two hundred million dollars' worth of gold was dug out of the veins of the earth. The supply has been more than doubled in the last seven years, and the prospect is for a large increase in the near future. But the most interesting fact of all is the cause for this increase in the production of gold. The great cause has not been the opening of new mines like those which the early Californians uncovered to the greedy gaze of mankind, although there have been important discoveries; but it lies rather in the marvelous improvement in mining machinery and

the application of economical scientific processes by which miners are now able to work with great profit grades of ore which, until within the last few years, could not be worked at all because the expense was more than the amount of gold saved. The great mines of South Africa, from which gold to the value of forty-two millions of dollars has been mined annually, turn out ore of so low a grade that it averages only about eleven dollars to the ton. Before the use of the new processes only one half of the gold could be obtained, while now they are able to save forty per cent more of the gold, which amounts to more than all the profits in working the mines. There are such great quantities of this low grade ore in the world that there seems to be no limit in sight to the obtaining of gold by the aid of these new scientific methods. The result is that we are getting from grades of ore that the old Argonauts of California would have looked on with contempt twice as much gold every year as was obtained when the virgin gold fields of California and Australia were pouring forth their richest flood.

As I have studied these facts it has occurred to me that they illustrate very faithfully conditions in the higher realms of human life. We are, as Henry Ward Beecher used to say, approaching "the reign of the common people." The giants and the geniuses have done about all for this world that they can do. The great triumph that is to come for humanity, bringing in universal knowledge, righteousness, and peace, must be the conquest, not of the few, but of the multitude; not of the talented aristocracy, but the one-talented rank and file of

human kind. There is here a great lesson for the Christian Church. What is needed above all things to spread rapidly the conquest of the kingdom of Christ among men is a process which enables us, speaking in the language of the gold miners, to work the lower grades of human ore with profit. That which has paralyzed the strength of the Church in recent years more than anything else has been a kind of half-confessed skepticism as to the ability of the Christian Church to save certain great elements of society. There are hundreds of thousands of men and women in this country who have been wrenched loose from the moorings of early Christian faith and life. They are people who have been washed out of their home pockets, as the mountain gold is sometimes caught by the freshets and carried down the turbulent streams in the sand and gravel until it is finally deposited upon some far-off sand bar to await the coming of a miner patient enough and skillful enough to gather it again and send it forth upon useful missions into the world. Every great city has its shoals and sand bars of human life upon which the currents of society have deposited this human sediment until it looms up above the tide and becomes a threatening barrier to the progress of civilization and righteousness in the community.

Two things are absolutely necessary if a Christian Church is to fulfill its mission in the salvation of the masses of the people. The first is a faith, deep and abiding, that God has not made any man or woman without spiritual intuitions; that there is a vein of spiritual gold, just as good in its quality as any in

the treasury of heaven, in the poorest and most ignorant human being born into the world. If the Bible does not teach this it does not teach anything. It also teaches just as clearly the possible salvation of this spiritual wealth under the most adverse circumstances. If the life of Jesus Christ had been lived for the one purpose of setting forth before humanity the worth of the human soul, and the rich veins of immortal wealth in the most sinful and ignorant hearts, it could not have been better chosen. From the poor demoniac of Gadara to the dying thief upon the cross Jesus Christ found something divine and heavenly in the most wretched of human beings. This confidence must permeate the Church, must control its judgment, and inspire it with constant heroism.

The second thing which is necessary to the winning of the common people to Christ is willingness on the part of the Church to adapt itself to the time in which it lives, and to discover and adopt the necessary processes by which it may save the priceless gold which is lying waste in such enormous quantities all about us. There is not wanting abundant illustration to show that willingness to adapt ourselves to the conditions of present life will be greatly blessed of God in the winning of souls which, under the transforming influences of Christianity, shall become effective instruments in the kingdom of God. It may be doubted whether a more significant meeting was ever gathered in the city of New York than that great audience which assembled in Carnegie Hall to make its protest against the removal from America of Mr.

and Mrs. Ballington Booth, then the leaders of the Salvation Army in this country. How many of us remember the beginning of the Salvation Army—the contempt with which it was treated; how only a few years ago its soldiers were stoned and mobbed and refused police protection; and not only so, but its officers and soldiers were arrested and imprisoned in many of our American towns and cities! What a wonderful change has been wrought in a few years! Now, Mr. Chauncey Depew, our representative American, is not ashamed to preside, and the mayor of New York and bishops and eloquent divines do not hesitate to speak at a great meeting gathered to do honor to the Salvation Army which, scarcely ten years ago, was a stench in the nostrils of the American public. What is the cause of all this? The Salvation Army is the same as ever. It is the public that has changed, and not the Army. The answer is very simple. The Salvation Army has proved that it possesses a process by which large quantities of a grade of human ore that had been slipping through the clutches of the Churches entirely could be worked with the result of the salvation of multitudes of precious souls. The Salvation Army is not afraid of a tramp; no, not even though he is also a drunkard, they reach these poor, drunken, outcast classes by the tens of thousands, and their statistics show that three fourths of all who are converted and actually enlisted remain true to their colors. I remember hearing General Booth say in Boston, a few years ago, in a public address, that on getting off a train in New York a few days before an officer in an unusually neat uniform had

touched his hat to him, and he had turned to the American commissioner and asked who the officer was. He said, "It is Ash-barrel Jimmy." And this was his story: Ash-barrel Jimmy was a bright New York boy, but became besotted by rum. He was brought again and again before the police court, sent to jail time after time, but all to no avail. He slept in old boxes and ash barrels. One cold night, drunk, as usual, he was wandering about seeking aimlessly for some shelter, when he found a barrel partly full of ashes, and started to crawl down into it, when he toppled over, head first, and actually went off into a drunken stupor with his ragged half-frozen legs sticking over the top. The next morning a policeman found him there and heartlessly dragged him by the legs over the sidewalk to the court room, where he arrived bruised and bleeding. The judge looked at Ash-barrel Jimmy and said: "Well, Jimmy, so you are here again, are you? I'll tell you what I'll do. If you will go down to the Salvation Army Barracks and stay there two weeks I'll let you off." Jimmy gladly promised, happy to get off so easy. Out of the court room, down the street, with head and body covered with ashes, rags, and blood, he went, till he came in front of the "Barracks." A policeman who was standing there shoved him back, asking, "What do you want here?" But Jimmy said the court had sentenced him there for two weeks, and he must go in. Before the two weeks were up Ash-barrel Jimmy was converted, and from that day on never drank a drop, but lived a manly, Christian life. General Booth laughingly said, on concluding the story, that he

thought the time would come when police judges, instead of sending drunken men to jail to be hardened in crime, would say to the prisoner, "You are condemned to spend six months with the Salvation Army at the expense of the government."

Now, I contend that what has given the Salvation Army its marvelous power to save men that the Churches have not been saving has not been really a new process in spiritual gold mining, but a revival of the process illustrated by Jesus Christ himself. In the speaking of General Booth and all the leaders of the Salvation Army there is constantly present a buoyant enthusiasm, a sanguine confidence that Jesus Christ is able to save the wickedest men and women. There is in these people that spirit of exalted enthusiasm which all people have who are conscious of the presence of the divine Spirit in men—a presence which has never failed in this world since, as James Russell Lowell says, "The first man stood, God-conquered, with his face to heaven upturned." These people succeed where cultivated and rich churches fail, because when they are face to face with the devil they still believe in God. They adapt themselves to the situation. With absolute confidence in the salvability of any human being, they sally forth with the same kind of heavenly audacity that nerved David to go out to meet Goliath.

I would to God that every Church in America was animated with the spirit of the Salvation Army! If so, what a golden stream of treasure would pour into the storehouses of heaven from what has been regarded as the waste heaps of human life! It is

not often that we read words so telling and so true and important as the utterances of Bishop Henry C. Potter, in an address given in Grace Chapel, New York city. Said the eloquent bishop: "The growth of wealth and luxury, wicked, wasteful, and wanton, as, before God, I declare that luxury to be, has been matched step by step by a deepening and deadening poverty which has left whole neighborhoods of people practically without hope and without aspiration. At such a time, for the Church of God to sit still and be content with the theories of its duties outlawed by time and long ago demonstrated to be grotesquely inadequate to the demands of a living situation, this is to deserve the scorn of men and the curse of God! Take my word for it, men and brethren, unless you and I and all those who have any gift or stewardship of talents or means, of whatever sort, are willing to get up out of our sloth and ease and selfish dilettanteism of service, and get out among the people who are battling amid their poverty and ignorance—young girls for their chastity, young men for their better ideal of righteousness, old and young alike for one clear ray of the immortal courage and the immortal hope—then verily the Church in its stately splendor, its apostolic orders, its venerable ritual, its decorous and dignified conventions, is revealed as simply a monstrous and insolent impertinence!"

The Church has not yet waked up, save here and there a soul, to the fact that a congregation which contents itself with simply meeting at stated intervals to worship in the church building, as in former times in this country, must, in the very nature of

things, perish. We need the gold-mining spirit in the Church—the spirit of the prospector who goes out seeking after indications of gold, and who digs long and patiently that he may find it and apply some process by which he may save every grain of the precious metal. The modern Church must do as Christ did—we must seek men in their homes; we must hunt them up in the fields, and at their boats, and about their business; we must be interested in their sicknesses and their sorrows; we must bring the brotherhood of the sympathetic and kindly Christ into charming personal contact with them.

Do not for a moment think that in pointing out such a line of service as the duty of Christian people I am pointing out some hard, dull work which would reduce the interest and pleasure of your life if you were to take it up. There are many of you who hear me who never think of doing any work of this kind, yet who, if you were to really thrust yourself out into this field of activity, visiting for Christ's sake in home and street, and endeavoring to bring the Christianity which God has bestowed upon you into personal, vital contact with those who are strangers to it, would find it the fountain of a new interest in life. It would be to your own enjoyment of life like the branches which Moses cast into the bitter stream, that made the waters sweet again. A woman who came from the most cultivated and refined social surroundings to work among the poorest in our neighboring city of New York was recently asked, "Do you find your work hard?" "Never," she answered, her whole face aglow with enthusiasm. "Never! It is so intensely interest-

ing!" I would that many more of us might know the intense joy and interest of that life of service.

There is also in our study a suggestion of hope to anyone who is discouraged about his or her own soul. You have tried to get the gold out of your own nature, and you have failed. You have suffered defeat again and again in your earnest attempts to lift yourself into a noble and a pure life. I bring you hope. Jesus Christ is the one spiritual miner who knows how to save all the gold there is in a man's nature. Christ always saw all the good there was in anybody he met. He developed traits in people that their friends did not know about, and that the scribes and Pharisees did not believe they possessed. So I am sure that I speak to some now who are not Christians, but have veins of spiritual wealth in them more glorious than they dream of. I beg you to yield your hearts to the hand of him whose magnetic fingers can find every grain of the heavenly gold hidden beneath the sediment of sin and evil in your heart.

II.

Our Rose Garden in the Desert.

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing."—Isa. xxxv, 1, 2.

WHATEVER local reference these words may have had, there can be no doubt that they teach that wherever human hearts come into harmony with God and live in fellowship with him there is brought about a condition of things that can truly be likened to a desert turned into a garden, and solitary and lonely places transformed by the rejoicing and gladness of human fellowship. Luke tells us that when Philip went to Samaria and preached Christ to the people "there was great joy in that city." The religion of Jesus Christ is a cheerful and happy faith, bringing gladness with it, wiping away tears, lifting up the bowed down, bidding the discouraged hope again, and turning the wailings of sorrow into songs of gladness.

The picture drawn for us in the text is a very strong one. The loneliness of the wilderness and the wide stretches of solitude aptly suggest the loneliness of the soul that is without God and without hope in the world. In the great Desert of Sahara, at least over that part of it controlled by the French, the government has established lines of what are known as Optic Telegraph Towers, by means of which messages are signaled with a flashlight from one

station to another at night. They are a sort of lighthouse in the desert. They set these solitary stations in the midst of the hot, glowing sand about forty-five miles apart. There is, perhaps, no such lonely position on the face of the earth as that of an optic telegraphist in one of these desert towers. In a real lighthouse the keeper has some company in the ships that he watches on the ocean, and scarcely ever a day passes but many such in some sense keep him company; but in these lighthouses of the desert there is absolutely no society except when a stray Arab chances to pass that way. The keeper spends a life of weary monotony in the expectation of some day having something to flash to the station on the one hand or the other, forty-five miles away. Sad as is that picture of loneliness, it is not too sad to illustrate the loneliness of a soul that has lost the consciousness of fellowship with God. The world may be full of people, but it is a desert and lonely beyond comparison to the man who has gotten out of touch with it because he has cut himself off from God. Poor Judas knew what that loneliness was when he had sold his Master, and had no one in all the world to whom he could go for fellowship. Thank God that, though we may wander far away from him and know the awful loneliness of "the wilderness and the solitary place," there is that within our hearts which responds to the call of Heaven and makes us know that we are the children of God and that our rightful home is with him. Humboldt, in his story of his travels in South America, says that sometimes the loneliness was beyond all comparison, and that it was impos-

sible to conceive in an inhabited land the majestic tranquillity which the aspect of the firmament presented in that solitary region. When tracing with the eye at nightfall the meadows which bounded the horizon, the plain gently undulating, he would sometimes imagine that he beheld from afar, as in the deserts of the Orinoco, the surface of the ocean supporting the starry vault of heaven. In such hours every object that he gazed upon seemed to tell him how far he was from his native land. If in a time like that he heard from the depths of the valley the tinkling of a bell or the lowing of herds, the remembrance of his own country was awakened suddenly. The sounds were like distant voices resounding from beyond the ocean and with magical power transporting him from one hemisphere to the other. So there is something in our hearts that echoes to the heavenly music. God help us, every one, to let it lead us home to the Father's heart!

Sin, with its accompaniment of wicked habit, is often compared to a desert, and very aptly so. A recent writer in the *Popular Science News* describes a gulch in the northeastern part of Yellowstone Park that rivals the Javanese Death Valley as a death-trap for wild animals. It is a gulch between the hills where poisonous gases come out from the fissures in the rocks, and squirrels, rabbits, and even elk and bears are asphyxiated by these deadly breaths from hidden fires. Alas! we have plenty of such murder-gulches legally established in our modern cities, where not rabbits and squirrels, but men and women, boys and girls, are destroyed by the poisonous atmosphere.

Into the midst of the desert of human sin Christ comes with a message of hope which causes rejoicing and gladness wherever he is received. In a fisherman's hut in the extreme northeast of Scotland is a picture of our Saviour, and the fisherman thus tells its story: "I was 'way down with drink," he said, "when one night I went into a public house, and there hung this picture. I was sober then, and I said to the bartender, 'Sell me that picture; this is no place for the Saviour.' I gave him all the money I had for it and took it home. Then, as I looked at it, the words of my mother came back to me. I dropped on my knees and cried, 'O Lord Jesus, will you pick me up again and take me out of all my sins?'" No such prayer is ever unanswered. And the traveler who tells the story declares that to-day that fisherman is the grandest man in that little Scotch village. When he was asked if he did not have a great struggle to give up liquor a look of exultation came over his face as he answered, "When such a Saviour comes into the heart he takes the love of drink right out of it."

One of the most hopeful things about our Christianity is that when Jesus Christ comes into our hearts he not only gives us spiritual life enough to make our own soul an oasis in the desert, but he makes it possible for the living stream which wells up in our hearts to refresh and fertilize other hearts about us, thus making the ever-widening oasis to bloom with gladness and joy.

I have been reading recently a very interesting account given by a traveler of the oasis of El Oued, in the desert of Sahara. The wind blows terribly

there, and the sand sweeps in all the time, threatening to cover up that little spot of green, and the people who live there are continually digging out the sand, until they call the place "The Sunk Gardens of El Oued." The position of affairs at El Oued is similar to that of Holland, and the inhabitants of the oasis have to be as vigilant as ever were the Dutch against their ever-present enemy, with this difference: whereas the Hollanders fight against the inroads of the ocean, the El Ouedians have to combat the incoming sand; and while one rears dykes to keep out the water, the other digs holes to clear out the sand. For while the ocean invades Holland by land, as it were, the sand invades El Oued by the air. The fierce winds of the Sahara blow up dense clouds of destructive sand across these precious sunk gardens at El Oued, and if it were not for the sleepless vigilance of the inhabitants the gardens would soon not only be sunk gardens, but buried gardens as well. One of the gardens visited by this traveler, whose account I have been reading, was forty-five feet in depth, and was planted with splendid palms. The effect of these trees, planted down so deep and sending their crests high up toward the hot sunlight, is curious. The traveler coming in from the desert imagines at first that he sees numbers of flat green mats lying upon the surface of the sand, but closer inspection proves the "mats" to be the tops of lofty palms whose roots repose deep down in the cool shade of the dug-out garden. At El Oued the lifework of the people is digging sand. All day long, all their life long, the whole laboring popula-

tion have never anything to do but fill baskets with sand at the bottom of the garden and carry them up to the edge of the sand rampart around the top and there spill out the contents of the baskets. And so they labor on, generation after generation, like so many captives in a bewitched castle, appointed to labor at a never-ending task.

As I read the description of this curious place and imagined the dreary monotony of that sort of life I reflected that, after all, that was the idea that many people have of religion—to be forever digging up the sand blown in from the weary deserts about, and tugging it up over the rampart, only to see it blown back again. But, thank God, Jesus Christ gives us a far different idea of Christianity from that. We are, under his guidance, to capture all the desert about us. Travelers tell us that the one thing that has won the hearts of the Arabs and made them willing to submit to, and even be glad of, the rule of the French, is that the French dig so many new wells. These poor dwellers of the desert welcome the birth of each new well with much rejoicing. A new well means a new spot habitable for man; it is like opening up a new country. No wonder they rejoice exceedingly. In the neighborhood of Touggourt an artesian well was sunk which suddenly tapped a splendid vein of water. The Arabs of the vicinity, who were watching the operations of the French engineers with the curiosity that an idle and ignorant people always show, beheld the rush of water. They shouted for joy; they leaped about and rolled themselves in the water. Joy prevailed everywhere; the prospect of

a new oasis opened before them, with its lofty palms, its luscious fruits and toothsome vegetables; everything, in short, that in Arab estimation is worth living for was now possible because of the life-giving water.

It is to such a joy as that that Jesus compares the awakening of spiritual life in a hitherto sinful heart. He declares that the water that he shall give to us shall be a well of water—not like the well where you must have a windlass with a long chain to let down the bucket in search of the water, but like the artesian well that taps a vein of water so strong, and flowing from a reservoir so lofty and full, that it gushes forth upon the desert, changing the nature of the heretofore worthless soil wherever it flows, until the solitary place is glad and the desert rejoices and becomes a rose garden of fragrance and beauty.

There is something wonderfully vital and alive in this figure as suggesting the character of the religious experience which those who walk in fellowship with Christ should manifest to the world. Alas for the man whose Christian experience is only a memory of something that happened long ago! It ought to be a living, upspringing fountain, blessing and making glad every present hour. On the eastern bank of the Orinoco River there is a great cave which seems to have been a sort of national burying place, where there are multitudes of skeletons of an ancient race. There is a legend among the Indians that there was once a brave tribe called the Atures, who, being closely pursued by the cannibal Caribs, took refuge in this lonely place, and that here the whole oppressed race perished, together with its language. When Humboldt and Bonpland were in

that country there was still living in Maypures an old parrot which was an incessant talker, but could not be understood by the Indians who held it prisoner, because, as the natives asserted, it spoke the language of the Atures. What an odd, strange figure that old parrot, the last belated remnant of a race of human beings whose life and language had died out of the earth, leaving behind only this silly bird to chatter meaningless phrases of a tongue never to be spoken more by human lips! Strange and pathetic as that is, is it not a graphic illustration of the condition of a soul that has once known a happy and joyous communion with God, that has rejoiced in vital fellowship with Jesus Christ and with his people, has spoken with glad heart the language of the kingdom of heaven, but has permitted that life to be overcome and crowded out by the things of the world until there is left only a grewsome skeleton of form and ceremony, or some parrot chatter of cant phrases from which all the living thought and love and meaning have long since perished? If there be any to whom this illustration comes in the way of a personal appeal I pray that it may wake you from the dead and bring you back to prayerful, tender fellowship with the Master.

We see by this beautiful text that the great characteristic of our Christian life is that it shall be a service to humanity and beautify and bless those who need it most. As some one sings:

> " Service sweet the Saviour loves,
> Toil from all whom he has blest ;
> Work that makes this cold, dark world
> Full of sunshine, joy, and rest.

" Service true the Saviour wants,
Toil of body, soul, and brain;
Work that lifts mankind to God,
Toil that spreads Immanuel's reign.

" Service kind, the Saviour says,
Gives the toiler precious pay;
Even cups of water cold,
In his name, make glad the day."

The history of our civilization is refreshed and beautified by the lives of those who, like the Master, have gone about doing good. And there were never in the world so many such as there are now. The whole civilized world was made glad by the heroic kindness of Clara Barton, the head of the Red Cross Society in America, who, at sixty-five years of age, journeyed to Turkey and on into Armenia, carrying help to the starving sufferers among those oppressed and outraged people. When the war of the rebellion broke out Clara Barton was a clerk in the Patent Office, having been formerly a Yankee school-teacher, and was thirty years old. She was in Washington when the soldiers of her own State were brought there from Baltimore, where the first blood of the war had been shed. She met them at the station, saw that the forty wounded men were taken to the hospital and the rest quartered at the Capitol, where she caused baskets of food to be brought and the soldiers fed. And from that she went right on caring for wounded soldiers and doing whatever she could that seemed to be left undone. Lucy Larcom said that what everybody else forgot Clara Barton always remembered. She always had plenty of bandages for the

wounded and plenty of nice warm gruel for the men that were ready to faint under the knife of the surgeon. And one night on the battlefield, when the surgeons were dismayed at finding themselves left with only one half-burnt candle amid thousands of bleeding, dying men, it was Clara Barton who lighted up the field with the candles and lanterns which her forethought had supplied. No wonder they called her the "Angel of the Battlefield." After the defeat at Fredericksburg, when the half-starved, half-frozen soldiers were brought to her, she had great fires built for their comfort, attended to the administering of cordials, and caused an old chimney to be pulled down to get bricks with which to warm them, while she had but the shelter of a tattered tent between her and the piercing winds. She was in many battles, often directly under fire; her clothing was frequently grazed and pierced, but she was never wounded. At the battle of Antietam, as she stooped to lift the head of a wounded man, a ball passed between her arm and her body, killing the soldier instantly. She worked throughout the war without ever thinking about any salary. She had some money of her own, and used it without stint, saying, "What is money to me if I have no country?"

After the war was over she went to Switzerland to rest, and there first heard of the Red Cross Society. It was through her influence that the United States joined the International Association. The Red Cross Society is a great treaty entered into by the nations of the earth for the purpose of alleviating the suffering of war. Under its flag all ground is neutral; all persons lawfully wearing its badge

can go unmolested; the sick and wounded of the enemy are cared for with the same tenderness shown one's own; it marks a great step in advance over past civilization. But Christianity will not stop with that; Christ shall go on conquering and banishing the cruelty and greed of mankind until war shall cease out of the earth.

Clara Barton was in the Franco-Prussian war, tirelessly caring for the sick and dying, and came home bearing many crosses of honor as tokens of appreciation of her loving service. This heroic woman, who is not afraid of the Turks, is a little mite of a body, with a sweet, gentle voice, who never had any great ambition except to just show forth the kindness of her heart to the one that needed it most. In reply to some one who asked her about it she said: "I have no mission. I never had a mission. But I have always had more work than I could do lying around my feet, and I try hard to get it out of the way so as to go on and do the next." This brave woman is a signal illustration of what a priceless blessing to the world one may be who, in all humility and simplicity, gives the entire personality up to be used of Christ in making earth's desert to smile and bloom. When considering such a career as that how vulgar and mean seems a life of selfishness, no matter how prosperous the world may regard it! I call you to this high order of Christian chivalry!

III.

The Art of Giving Encouragement.

"Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you."—Isa. xxxv, 3, 4.

FATHER TAYLOR, the famous old sailor preacher of Boston, was a wonderfully practical man, and on many occasions said things that go straight to the heart of our human nature. During his last illness a friend came in one day to see him and said to him, in a sentimental sort of way, that no doubt the angels were about him. "I don't want angels," blurted out the bluff, big-hearted old warrior. "I want folks. Folks are better than angels." That strong but not irreverent statement lets the light into a great truth—the fact that in this world we are dependent for our joys and fellowships very largely upon each other. Paul thanked God that Jesus Christ "took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." If you analyze that statement closely it will seem very like the statement of Father Taylor. That which makes Jesus Christ so dear to the heart of mankind among rich and poor, learned and ignorant, the whole world round, is because he took upon himself our nature and lived as one of us, became a part of us, shared with us in our trials and troubles and joys, so that we call him with all affection and confidence our "Elder Brother."

I am sure you will pardon me if at this time I discuss our theme very largely from the human side and recall to our consideration the glorious privilege which is given to every one of us of being encouragers of our brothers and sisters. I believe with Margaret Sangster that the best angels that we have anything to do with in their power to comfort us and inspire us are those dear angels who are disguised as men and women, and who walk the lowly paths of human toil by our side. She sings:

"In the old days God sent his angels oft
To men in threshing-floors, to women pressed
With daily tasks; they went to tent and croft,
And whispered words of blessing and of rest.

"Not mine to guess what shape those angels wore,
Nor tell what voice they spoke, nor with what grace;
They brought the dear love down that evermore
Makes lowliest souls the best abiding place.

"But in these days I know my angels well;
They brush my garments on the common way,
They take my hand, and very softly tell
Some bit of comfort in the waning day.

"And though their angel-names I do not ken,
Though in their faces human want I read,
They are God-given to this world of men,
God-sent to bless it in its hours of need.

"Child, mother, dearest wife, brave hearts that take
The rough and bitter cross and help us bear
Its heavy weight when strength is like to break,
God bless you each, our angels unaware."

The strongest men and women have often found themselves in the condition pictured in this Scripture, with the hands weak, the knees feeble, and

the heart full of fear. In such an hour there is a marvelous comfort in human sympathy, and the heart craves and longs for it. A gentle-souled woman with a face transfigured with kindness, which always abounded within her heart, called one day at a public poorhouse to see a little orphaned girl who had been placed there. She took with her a present for the child, but before giving it she asked, "Now, dear, what would you like best?" The lady referred, of course, to the present which she had brought with her. The little one looked up wistfully and shyly said, "I would like to sit on your knee for a minute, as if I were your own little girl." Many a soul that was ready to faint has been lifted out of defeat into victory by a word of good cheer and recognition. I heard a kindergarten teacher say the other day that in her work among the children in the slums she had a little boy six months under her care before she could discover that she was doing him any good at all. Finally she found out what was the matter. The little fellow was entirely discouraged. He had been cuffed about without any love or sympathy, and treated as though he were of no account, until he had come to believe it himself. He had no self-respect left. She tried praising him, and to her astonishment it was like a cup of fresh water on a thirsty plant. His better nature woke into life and his soul revived within him. He was soon one of the best boys that she had. He needed encouraging.

This story is told of an intercollegiate game of football: One of the teams which came from

a long distance was very tired, and went upon the field with a feeling that they were going to be defeated. Two of their best players dropped out through sickness, and every member of the team was discouraged. When they went to play the home college team naturally received thunders of applause. One among the strangers said that when he looked round he felt as if he had not a friend in all the crowd. Finally the ball came his way, and he did the best he could, hoping against hope, when suddenly he heard his own name shouted in the crowd. Some old men from his college were scattered in the crowd and were shouting for the sake of their old *alma mater*. There were only four of them, but they made lots of noise. The young player says that when he heard that the blood rushed through him. Somebody was backing him! He made a touchdown. Every man in the team pulled himself together at that shout. Contrary to all expectation they won the game. It was the cheer which came in the nick of time that did it.

We are everyday meeting people who are in need of encouragement, and our text is a command from God that we shall not be found wanting in giving it to them. "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong!"

One of the saddest features of our modern social life is the presence of so many people who not only do not seek to give encouragement to those who are trembling and ready to faint, but whose indifference or bitterness of spirit make them constant engines of discouragement to weak and already dis-

heartened souls. What a terrible thing it is to live in this world, where so many men and women are fighting against frightful odds and go to their daily tasks sick at heart, and, instead of holding out a hand of encouragement, by cruel criticisms and unfeeling sarcasm drive the iron still deeper into their souls. John Burroughs, the naturalist, says that the golden orioles have a troublesome way of destroying the farmers' grapes. They stick their long beaks into the grapes and suck up the juice, and in that way three or four birds are able to ruin several tons of grapes in a short time. Alas! there are a great many people who do that way in their treatment of their neighbors. They stick their sharp, critical beaks into other people's affairs and suck out the richest juice of comfort and happiness that there is in life. The difference is that while the orioles get fat on the grape juice they steal, the human grape-suckers leave misery behind them and carry misery away with them. Paul says about such people, "The poison of asps is under their lips." The asp is a venomous reptile which crawls through the grass, ready on opportunity to strike its fangs into the careless traveler. But, as one well says, the asp never poisons himself, while his human imitator does. And in this fact there is an additional fitness in Paul's use of the word "backbiter" in describing these cruel, unfeeling critics of their fellows. The backbiter not only strikes his victim in the back, but the blows come back on himself. He degrades his own character in trying to injure the reputation of others. He poisons his own soul while poisoning the peace of his fellow-men. Madame de

Stael had been very intimate with the Viscomte de Choiseul, but she had heard he had said some malicious things about her, and was very angry. One day they met at a friend's house. Good manners required that the feud should be forgotten and that they should speak to each other. Madame de Stael commenced by saying, "It is a long time since I have seen you, Monsieur de Choiseul."

"Ah, Madame de Stael, I have been ill."

"Seriously, monsieur?"

"I had a narrow escape from being poisoned."

"Alas! Possibly you took a bite of your own tongue."

I fear that it would be very dangerous for many people to try the experiment of that sort of food. Surely there can be no greater misuse of life, no more wicked misuse of it, than to so live that our conversation and conduct is a source of discouragement and disaster to those who are fighting for their very lives.

What a contrast is such a life to that of the woman whom Jean Ingelow tells about! Off the coast of one of the Orkney Islands, and right opposite the harbor, stood a lonely rock against which on stormy nights the boats of returning fishermen often struck and were lost. Fifty years ago there lived in a cottage on this island a young girl and her father, and they loved each other very tenderly. One stormy night the father was away on the sea in a fisherman's boat, and, though his daughter watched for him in much fear and trouble, he did not come home. In the morning his dead body was found washed up on the beach. His boat, as

he sought the harbor, had struck against the lonely rock and gone down. In her deep sorrow this fisherman's orphan did not think of herself alone. She was scarcely more than a child, humble, poor, and weak, but she said in her heart that while she lived no more boats should be lost on the "Lonely Rock" if a light shining through her window would guide them safely into the harbor. And so, after watching the body of her father, according to the custom of her people, until it was buried, she lay down and slept through the day, but when night fell she arose and lighted the candle and placed it in the window of her cottage so that it might be seen by any fisherman coming in from sea, and guide him safely into the harbor. She sat by the candle all night and trimmed it and spun; when the day dawned she went to bed and slept. As many hanks as she had spun before for her daily bread she spun still, and one over, to buy her nightly candle. And from that time, for fifty years, through youth, maturity, and old age, she turned night into day; and in the snowstorms of winter, through driving mists, deceptive moonlight, and solemn darkness, that northern harbor was never once without the light of her candle. How many lives she saved by this candle, and how many meals she won by it for the poor families of the boatmen, it is impossible to say. How many dark nights the fishermen, depending upon it, went forth, cannot now be told. There it stood, regular as a lighthouse, steady as constant care should make it. The fisherman had only to keep it constantly in view and he was safe. There was but one thing to intercept it, and

that was the rock. However far they might have gone out to sea they had only to bear down to that lighted window, and they were sure of a safe entrance to the harbor.

How glorious it is to live a life like that!—a life that is always keeping somebody off the rock where he may find shipwreck; a life whose flame is always lighted in mercy and sympathy; a life whose windows have always streaming from them a steady gleam that brings hope to the fearful mariner on life's tempestuous sea.

Sympathy is so precious a thing that we ought never to restrain it and repress it in its work of encouragement and blessing. It is often aroused in hearts which yet never rise into gracious action, and by repression the sympathy dies and the heart becomes gradually cold and unfeeling. A certain duchess once paid a visit to a convent on a cold winter day. The convent was poor, the friars were out of wood, and had nothing but their charity and the ardor of their prayers to keep out the cold. The duchess got a chill during her stay in the comfortless parlor of the convent, and returned home filled with pity for the suffering friars. While the maid was removing her mistress's cloak, adding logs to the cheerful fire, and preparing a warm drink, the duchess summoned her steward and ordered some wood to be sent immediately to the convent. She then had her couch moved close to the fireside, the warmth of which, together with the cordial, soon revived her. The recollection of what she had just suffered was speedily lost in her present comfort, and when the steward came in again to ask how

many loads of wood he was to send the great lady remarked carelessly: "O, you can wait. The weather is very much milder now." The warmth and comfort of her own room had cooled down her charity. It is a sad fact that is often observed that many people who have come up through hard personal exertion, and who during the days of their struggle have felt sympathy and kindness to all who were in like sorrow and trial and hardship, having reached abundant means and greater power to be helpful to their fellow-men, seem to forget how to put themselves in their brother's place. The time to do the sympathetic deed, to speak the encouraging word, to extend the hand to the weak, is the prompt moment when the heart is conscious of that emotion of sympathy, and the lips or the hands feel the gentle prompting from within. Many a heaven-sent message, many a divine action, has died into silence or failed to be accomplished because of delay.

Whoever lives a life of prompt yielding to the opportunities of sympathetic human fellowship will save himself many regrets and store up treasures of memory more precious than any bank vault has ever held. A white-haired man stood up in a young people's meeting not long ago and bore this testimony: "One day—a long, hot day it had been, too—I met my father on the road to town. 'I wish you would take this package to the village for me, Jim,' he said, hesitating. Now, I was a boy of twelve, not fond of work, and just out of the hayfield, where I had been at work since daybreak. I was tired, dusty, and hungry. It was two miles into

town. I wanted to get my supper and dress for singing class. My first impulse was to refuse and to do it harshly; for I was vexed that he should ask me, after my long day's work. If I did refuse, he would go himself. He was a gentle, patient, old man. But something stopped me—one of God's good angels, I think. 'Of course, father, I'll take it,' I said, heartily, giving my scythe to one of the men. He gave me the package. 'Thank you, Jim,' he said. 'I was going myself, but somehow I don't feel very strong to-day.' He walked with me to the road that turned off to the town; and as he left he put his hand on my arm, saying again, 'Thank you, my son. You have always been a good boy to me, Jim.' I hurried into town and back again. When I came near the house I saw a crowd of the farm hands at the door. One of them came to me, the tears rolling down his face. 'Your father,' he said, 'fell dead just as he reached the house. The last words that he spoke were to you.'" The old gentleman concluded his testimony by saying: "I am an old man now; but I have thanked God over and over again, in all the years that have passed since that hour, that those last words were, 'You've always been a good boy to me.'"

If we are to live in that spirit of kindness and self-denial, giving forth constant good cheer and inspiration to others, we must have the faith abiding in our hearts which is given us as the source of encouragement in our text. Only a faith in a personal God, who cares about us individually, and who loves us with the tenderness of the gentlest father or mother, and whose arm is strong enough

to protect us against all that can come against us, can give us that fountain of cheerfulness which will make our lives, even when we are unconscious of it, sources of encouragement to disheartened souls. Thank God, there are so many whose faces, as we see them in the street, or in the shops, among the commonest experiences of our daily lives, have in them that confident and cheerful trust that gives us courage and a higher conception of the value of humanity and the sweetness of human living. We often see in the crowd hurrying along the sidewalk faces which are so bright and courageous that on the coldest morning the thermometer goes up twenty degrees after they have passed.

A trust in God, a thankful soul that takes every good gift, however humble, as a boon to be treasured for the fragments of good and blessing there are in it, makes the possessor a constant benediction. One day a gentleman saw two barefooted boys going along the street. Their clothes were ragged and dirty, and tied together by pieces of string. One of the boys was perfectly happy over a half-withered bunch of flowers which he had just picked up in the street. "I say, Billy," said he to his companion, "wasn't somebody real good to drop these flowers just where I could find them? And they are so pretty and sweet. Look sharp, Billy; maybe you'll will find something by and by." Presently the gentleman heard his merry voice again, saying: "O Billy, if here ain't half a pear, and it ain't much dirty, either! 'Cause you haven't found anything, you may bite first." Billy was just going to take a very little taste of it when his companion said,

"Bite bigger, Billy; maybe we will find another 'fore long." What a gold mine that little fellow was! And any man or woman who goes through the world with that kind of a spirit is a rich gold mine of wealth to the family, the Church, or the community.

Let us take such strong hold upon God that our confidence shall be firm and secure; then they who look to us for good cheer and courage shall never look in vain. We may say, in all assurance to the fainting and discouraged, in the words of our text, "Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you." In such a faith we may sing with Carl Spencer:

"God hath so many ships upon the sea!
His are the merchantmen that carry treasure,—
The men of war all bannered gallantly,
The little fisher-boats and barques of pleasure.
On all this sea of time there is not one
That sailed without the glorious name thereon.

"The winds go up and down upon the sea,
And some they lightly clasp, entreating kindly,
And waft them to the port where they would be,
And other ships they buffet long and blindly;
The cloud comes down on the great sinking deep,
And on the shores the watchers stand and weep.

"And God hath many wrecks within the sea.
O, it is deep! I look in fear and wonder!
The wisdom throned above is dark to me;
Yet it is sweet to think God's care is under,
And yet the sunken treasures may be drawn
Into His storehouse when the sea is gone.

" So I that sail in peril on the sea,
With my beloved whom yet the waves may cover,
Say, God hath more than angel's care of me,
And larger share than I in friend and lover.
Why weep you so, ye watchers on the land?
This deep is but the hollow of his hand!"

IV.

The Glories of Spiritual Vision.

"The eyes of the blind shall be opened."—Isa. xxxv, 5.

IN a land where there were so many blind people this was a glorious prophecy, and when Jesus Christ came, fulfilling the prophecies, one of the most beautiful characteristics of his ministry was the giving of sight to the blind. Wherever he went on his mission of kindness and mercy, among rich and poor alike, you could track him through the country by the families that were full of rejoicing over some member of their group who had been healed of some loathsome disease, and in every town and village there would be some rejoicing man telling to every one that would listen to him the wonderful story of how he had received his sight. Thank God, Christianity has not ceased to open the eyes of the blind! The hospitals that are being built in all parts of the world through the benevolence and sympathy of the followers of Christ are carrying on the blessed work of the Master and more than ever fulfilling the promise of Isaiah that "the eyes of the blind shall be opened."

And yet there is a deeper and truer sense in which this prophecy is fulfilled in our midst. Moral and spiritual blindness are far greater deprivations than blind eyes. The illumination of the mind and heart

by the kindness and mercy of Christ was a greater blessing to poor blind Bartimæus than the privilege of seeing the earth and his fellow-men. To have one's eyes opened to spiritual things, so that we may rightly estimate the relative value of the seen and the unseen worlds, is a far more glorious fulfillment of the prophecy we are studying than any miracle of physical healing. If one cannot have both, the spiritual sight is preferable by far. Theodore Rand sings this great truth in his sweet sketch of "Marie Depure:"

"Not with her outward eyes, but with her mind,
Her living soul, her faith—for she was blind—
Marie Depure, with simple, loving heart,
Had seen the Christ, and chosen the good part.

"She never thought, with Milton in his pride,
'Does God exact day-labor, light denied?'
But gave her willing hands, as one who saw,
To deftly plait for use the yellow straw.

"With humble workers of her craft she wrought
For daily bread, and Christ's great lesson taught,
That love *the life* far more than meat regards,
And body, more than raiment sweet with nards.

"For when the pastor, who, like John, had leaned
Upon the Master's breast, spoke words that yeaned
The pity of his heart for those who sit
In heathen night, where no Christ's torch is lit,

"Marie Depure, her soul winged like a dove
Eager to bear the news of light and love,
Gave of her humble toil more than they all—
Since love makes willing answer to love's call.

"Amazed, the man of God to Marie said:
'Your gift is great, a part I take instead;'
But she with sweet insistence spake him, 'Nay,
I'm richer far than those who see the day!

"'These workers of the golden straw buy oil,
When darkness falls, that they may see to toil;
But I am blind, I need no oil for light—
I give this love-lit lamp for darker night.'

"Marie Depure! A sweet and gracious beam
Speed from thy burning lamp, a Christlike gleam
To those who in the darkness sit, and some
Who, without serving, pray, 'Thy kingdom come!'"

It is only when the spiritual eyes are opened by coming into contact with Jesus Christ and surrendering our hearts to him that the high and holy standards of Christianity seem reasonable and right to us. The great foundations of our holy Christianity are an enigma to those who are given up to the seeking of selfish and sensual ends. It is now as it was in the days of Paul: the cross is foolishness to some people and a stumbling-block to others, but to all who bow their proud heads and hearts before it, it becomes now, as then, the wisdom of God unto salvation. When the soul is lifted up into the higher spiritual realms, and the eye of the inner man is opened, the loftier standards of the Spirit seem reasonable and easy. Many of the commandments of Christ, like that which enjoins upon us to love our enemies and pray for them that use us despitefully and do good to them that persecute us, not only seem impossible from the worldly standpoint, but appear to be the height of folly; but when the spiritual eye is open we see all these things in a new light, and vengeance is transmuted into forgiveness, which Paul calls heaping coals of fire on your enemy's head.

A few months before the death of Phillips Brooks

a lady sitting at a table in a Boston café overheard the conversation of two young women who sat near her. One of the two had evidently been grievously wronged, and had gone to talk it over with the great-hearted bishop. They had met here by appointment to consider his advice. "Well, what did he say; for I suppose you have seen him?" "Yes," was the reply, "and he said just what we might have known Phillips Brooks would say. He listened so quietly, with that sad smile of his, speaking never a word until I was done, and then he said, so gently: 'I am sorry for you, very; it is hard to be misunderstood, injured, wronged, in this way; and yet, shall I hurt you more if I tell you that I am not so sorry for you as for some one else? Really, my friend, my larger, deeper sympathy is not for you, but for the wrongdoer, the one who has so needlessly caused all this pain. It is so, so pathetic to have made so much trouble in a world already so full of heartaches. I am, O, so sorry for him! As I have listened I have been wondering if it were not possible, after all that has occurred, to yet bring some gladness out from this pain, and if you had not best just have your revenge by forgiving all the wrong and helping him to awaken to a new life, with the hope of his yet amounting to something good. That would be such a splendid way to surprise him, and would make you so much gladder than to cherish the wrong. Are you willing to do this?' That was what he said to me," she exclaimed, with her face flushed and smiling almost through tears with the glad consciousness that she had been led to act in a manner worthy of her larger womanhood,

and was going to do this very "forgiving and helping to something good."

How far more glorious was the path of spiritual vision opened up to that young woman than the old blind way of anger and revenge! I doubt not there are many among us who need this message —you who have known something of spiritual vision, and yet under the stress of trial and suffering are often tempted to drop down again to the lower plane on which you lived before you knew Christ, and before you aspired to the higher, nobler things of the Spirit. If so I wish to say with all the earnestness of my soul that it is better to suffer, heroically and splendidly, animated by a noble purpose, sustained by an inner consciousness that you are walking in fellowship with Christ and doing the will of God, than to be comforted and find pleasure at the cost of your highest and holiest self-respect. If any eyes are dim and see not beyond the petty things of the earth, I pray that the magic hand of the Master may touch them again, and that the supreme realities of the soul may be revealed to you in all their loveliness.

We can only keep our farsighted vision by dwelling in the atmosphere of God's word and living lives of prayerfulness and fellowship with high things. Many people get to be nearsighted and blind in the same way that David did. He tells us about it in the seventy-third Psalm. He came near making entire shipwreck of his faith. He looked on the people about him, and there seemed so much prosperity among the wicked, and many of them were so proud and arrogant and went their violent

way with such utter disregard of God's law, and yet they seemed to increase in riches and abide in strength and abundance, that David was ready to exclaim in despair, "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency!" But when he went "into the sanctuary of God" he saw how foolish had been all his jealousy and his fears, and he cried out in thanksgiving, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever." In the light of the sublime truths of the sanctuary, little things that have seemed large dwindle down to their natural size, and the great realities loom up into prominence.

Bertha Shepard paints this picture: A trolley car was spinning along on its way out into the suburbs of a large city. It was a hot day, and Andrew, the motorman, was in a hard, unhappy mood. He mumbled to himself through his gritted teeth:

"A motorman! A slave, that is what I am. Why should I bounce up and down this rocky road, year in, year out? Dust, heat, glaring sun! I'm a machine, I suppose, attached to the motor in the morning and taken off again at night."

Bang! The car stops. Ding-dong! Bang! It starts again. The load of dusty passengers was increased by a portly, haughty looking man, who took his seat with a condescending resignation that told more plainly than words the sacrifice imposed by rickety car seats on a man accustomed to a carriage.

The motorman, glancing over his shoulder, muttered to himself, "Howling capitalist!"

The aristocratic individual who had just come in, catching something of the contemptuous glance, thought, "There's another of those plotting anarchists."

"I'll shake him up, though, that's one good thing," growled Andrew. "Wait till we get to the tracks."

Then as the conductor, springing off, signaled the crossing clear, Andrew put on more force, and rattle, whack, bang, the car flew across. Down grade, over switches, around curves, stopping here and there with a jerk, and starting up with a bounce, till the passengers, with groans and exclamations, one by one got off for transfers and home stops, and only the portly old gentleman remained.

"Wonder how he likes it?" chuckled the motorman. "What?" as the car suddenly stopped. "Power off? Good enough; now I hope we'll have a good time waiting here. He's bound for the Highlands, two miles ahead, I'll bet."

"What's the matter?"

"Power's off, sir."

"How long will we have to wait?"

"Don't know, sir."

"Hang the rascal, I believe it is his fault," the old man thinks, as he gets up and paces up and down the car. They are out in the edge of the country now, and the car stands opposite a little church. Suddenly a clear soprano voice floats out of the open window of the church. The merchant pauses in his fretful walk.

"'He was despised and rejected of men.'" The soloist is practicing for the Sunday service. She is a pale, earnest-looking girl, and as she sings alone in the cool, dark church her eyes are moist and her throat quivers with a little sob. "That is just like me," she murmurs, then repeats the refrain: "'He was despised and rejected.'"

"That's like me," mutters the motorman, and, sitting down, leans his head on the motor.

"'A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.'"

Now the merchant is sitting listening. "Would I have rejected him?" thought the haughty man.

"I'm glad he wasn't a capitalist," thought Andrew.

"'A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,'" sings the clear voice. The tired lines on the merchant's face disappear. He leans his head on his hand. His hat is off, and the breeze is softly blowing his white hair.

The motorman looks at him with a new interest. "Poor old chap," he thinks; "bet he knows what trouble is."

The soloist has struck a new chord on the organ now, and the clear voice sings in a stronger tone, "'O trust in the Lord! Wait patiently for him, and he will give thee thy heart's desire—and he will give thee thy heart's desire.'"

The power is on. Slowly the motorman rises and turns the brake, and as the car glides slowly on the full, sweet tones float after them: "'O trust in the Lord! Wait patiently for him.'"

"Hard times, stranger," says the motorman, as

he turns to look at the merchant who now seems only like a worn-out, broken-hearted old gentleman, rather than a "howling capitalist."

"The times are hard," the old gentleman replies, and, rising, swings himself around into the front seat close to the motorman. "You look as though you felt the times, too, my friend; we all feel them. I have lost my all, lost my all, and I am over seventy years old; but we'll come out all right. We just have to wait, wait patiently."

"That's about it, sir. Do you stop here?" as the gentleman rose. Andrew stopped the car slowly. "Good night, sir."

"Good night."

Andrew reversed the trolley and started back on the home trip; but what a different world it was!

"Lost his all, poor old chap! I haven't any all to lose. Ah, haven't I, though. There's Annie, little wife Annie. Heaven bless her!" And he gayly whistled—

> "'She's all the world to me;
> And for bonny Annie Laurie
> I'd lay me down and dee.'"

And as the car whirled merrily along the dusty road the whole world about seemed singing into the ears of the man who only an hour ago had thought himself a slave, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!"

Better than the magician's wand that turns all things into gold is the spiritual vision which will cause us to perceive the divine blessings that lie

about us on every side, and the possibility of building up imperishable possessions in the midst of this transient world.

To the clarified spiritual vision the beauty of the soul becomes of supreme importance. We sometimes think it very strange to hear brutal men talk about prize fighting and things of that sort as a method of "having a good time." It is not strange, however, when you remember that these men are spiritually blind men. If you could transform life for them by opening the eyes of their souls these same men would not be able to hurt a butterfly without a sense of pain. O for illuminated souls to appreciate spiritual beauty! As the poet sings:

"True, that one may be pretty and soulless as well;
But if beautiful, then in the soul it must dwell;
For true beauty is not an ephemeral thing,
But is rather a deep, inexhaustible spring;
Not a something put on for adornment and dress,
But inheres in the soul, is a grace to possess.

"The most beautiful woman we ever have known,
With the fading of years had more beautiful grown;
Though her cheeks they were furrowed with labor and care,
Though her brow it was wrinkled, and hands they were spare,
Though her once flaxen hair had been changed into gray,
And her faltering steps told of strength giving way;

"Yet a beautiful soul was enshrined in that mold,
And shone out like a halo, a joy to behold,
And more beautiful seemed as her parting she gave,
And her beautiful form was consigned to the grave.
For such hands are not wanting to floral wreaths weave
To be placed in the crown which they rightly receive.

"When a beauty of character thus is revealed,
We then willingly bow to the scepter they wield,
If they only the spirit of beauty possess,
Then their right to the crown we are glad to confess;
All the ages to such have allegiance shown,
And the spirit of beauty assigned to the throne."

Heaven grant us eyes to behold spiritual beauty, and may "the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us!"

V.

The Bright Side of Toil.

"We are laborers together with God."—1 Cor. iii, 9.

THE purpose which animates labor and the associations which surround it make all the difference between slavery and joyous exertion. It is sweet to labor for those we love, and we count it highest dignity to bear lowly burdens in fellowship with those whom we honor. The soldiers of Napoleon, or Washington, or Grant, or Lee, wanted no higher honor than to share with their great commander the hardships, the sufferings, and the dangers of the campaign and the battle. This great truth, that the spirit masters the body and makes love's labor light, is illustrated in the lowliest walks of life as well as the highest. Frank Stanton makes a poor man sing:

"I say, 'The world is lonely;
The hearth at home is cold,
And sad is life to child and wife
When life has little gold.'
But soft her arms steal round my neck—
My comforter so dear;
And, 'How much do you love me?'
And her sweet voice answers clear:

"'I love you, I love you
A hundred million,—there!'
And then I'm poor no more—no more,
For I'm love's millionaire!

"Then sweeter seems the breaking
Of poverty's sad bread,
And roses bloom from out the gloom
And crown her curly head.
And if sometimes a thankful tear
My dreaming eyes will fill,
Her soft arms steal around me,
And she whispers sweetly still:

"'I love you, I love you
A hundred million,—there!'
I weep no more: God help the poor!
I'm love's own millionaire."

Whoever is conscious that he is a laborer together with God has both high fellowship and sweetest sympathy and love to glorify his toil.

Those who live daily in this consciousness that they are following not a lonely course, but are working in a sympathetic yokefellowship with Jesus Christ, will be so busy pursuing their great purpose of helping to bless the lives of others that they will not have time to brood over themselves. There is a proper place for self-examination, and there is need that we all should live watchful lives; but, after all, nothing can be more fatal to an efficient and buoyant Christian experience than a constant turning of one's thought inward on himself. A few years ago there was in vogue in Germany a science called "Infant Culture." It started up in this country, but did not seem to thrive very well. The parents of newborn babes were furnished with diaries, which were to be filled up from day to day with minute observations upon the looks and actions of the children, from which observations could be deduced general rules concerning their develop-

ment in body, mind, and character. The effort, though well meant, was abandoned after a little while, as no committee could be found with patience enough to read the countless bulky volumes brought in by fond parents. One of the advocates of the system, in explaining its aim to gruff old Dr. Jowett, was asked, "And how long do the parents continue their record?" "Until the child is able to write. It becomes his duty then to note his daily progress, physical, mental, and moral, and to make notes of it." "Away with you, man!" cried the doctor, "are you not content with turning the grown folks into a race of bores, but must you make of their children self-conscious idiots?"

Robert Louis Stevenson told the story that he was once in conversation with a noted English literary man who was given to this morbid self-introspection. His own temptations and faults were favorite subjects of conversation with him. Stevenson listened to one of these unwholesome soliloquies one day with a grim smile, until there was a pause, when he replied: "S. and I both kept diaries at school. His ran about this way: 'Suffered temptation this morning to break the eighth moral law with regard to some fruit. Afternoon.—Examined the temptation, and the fruit. Evening.—Decided the experience of theft to be wholesome exercise for my soul. Night.—Found that it did not agree with me. Neither did the apples. Morning.—Remorse. Resolved to think about confession. Evening.—Decided that the pain from remorse and apples was equivalent to the pleasure received. Confession not necessary.' My journal had these

entries: 'Stole some apples. Deserved a licking. Got the licking.' And," he adds, "I think I was in a more hopeful state at the end."

I do not want any one to infer that I make a light thing of that severe struggle which goes on at many points in their history in the heart of every man and woman determined to do right, but I would like to impress upon every one as strongly as possible that it is not a negative life to which we are called, but to a positively earnest and enthusiastic fellowship with Jesus Christ in helping to save the world; and that to positively do good, making conquest of all the realm about us, is better than forever standing on guard at the gateway of the fortress.

This is just as true when the brooding is joyous as when it is sad. Some people give themselves up to a sort of mutual admiration society of one. You never hear of their winning anybody to Christ, or giving their money to advance the kingdom of God, or carrying the burdens of their brethren; but they live in a sort of halo of holy contemplation of the beauties of their own inner consciousness. It would be a good deal better for the Church and for such people if they could lose their halo for a while and get their shoulders under the load, alongside of the Master, in some earnest work for the advancement of the kingdom. Mrs. Plantz sings:

"I think I would not care to be
Waiting in great expectancy
For my dear King.
For if I kept my eager eyes
Always uplifted to the skies
Some little thing

Beneath my feet might dying be
That needed tender care from me.

"I would not dare be listening
With bated breath for echoing
Of angel's song,
For I might lose the feeble cry
Of some lost child that only I
Could lead along.
Enough for me each setting sun
Brings nearer the Beloved One.

"How sweet to labor some day long,
With busy hand and cheerful song,
And then to see
His presence turn the evening gloam
Into a golden pathway home
As He draws near.
Not by my merit, but his grace,
My King will find my lowly place."

If one works in such a fellowship with Christ he has great comfort and sustaining grace in trying hours. Great Heart came to the defense of Bunyan's Pilgrim, but never was there such a Great Heart as our Elder Brother, who is always near to those who are seeking to do his will. A busy woman entered her room hastily as the shadows of twilight were falling, and going directly to her desk turned up the gas and began to write. She worked on for half an hour, when the solitude became oppressive. She wheeled her chair around and, with a shock of joyful surprise, looked squarely into the smiling face of her dearest friend, lying on the lounge by her side. "Why, I did not know you were here!" she cried. "Why didn't you speak to me?" "Because you are so busy. You

didn't speak to me." So the Lord Jesus is always with those who are seeking to do his work. Sometimes we are so busy that we forget it for a while, but when we turn about to him, longing to see him, and feel his presence, he never disappoints us. His promise is, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Much of the best work that has ever been done in the world for the advancement of humanity has been accomplished by people who, in the depths of great sorrow and trial, were comforted by the fellowship of Christ, and afterward sought to comfort others with the comfort wherewith they themselves had been comforted of him. When one asked King Leopold, of Belgium, if he were willing to tell how he came to be interested in Africa, he frankly replied: "Yes, I will tell you how my interest in Africa began. I had only one son, my heir, the pride of my eyes, and he fell sick, and his sickness was unto death. It pleased God to take my darling boy unto himself, and I was left alone. In my grief my thoughts were turned to that Dark Continent in which were millions upon millions orphaned and friendless. While I meditated God seemed to say to me, 'There is your child,' and I adopted Africa from that time. And whatever I can do to lift the burdens and let in the light upon the poor people of Africa that I will do. All my private revenue is devoted to that object, and I have provided that when I die Africa shall be my heir."

How superior to all the military glory that kings have ever struggled for shall be that hour when the good King Leopold shall stand before the great

white throne and he that once wore the crown of thorns, shall point to a host of glorified ones that have come up from the Congo State because of his generous devotion, and say: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto me."

Those who are conscious of the presence of God in their daily lives have common experiences beautified and glorified by this high association. Two biographies have recently been published, telling the story of two noble Christian men. They are the lives of Dr. Andrew Bonar and Dr. Cairns. A journalist, speaking of the two books, remarks that they are as entirely different as the two men were totally distinct in their great personalities; but there is one thing which runs through them both like the same golden thread, is common to each, and that is the sunshiny optimism of the hearts of these champions of the Christian faith. Their lives were lives of blessed happiness. Their souls were both alike radiant with inextinguishable hopefulness, notwithstanding the fact that they lived in the age when literary pessimism had begun to create such dreary waste in modern society. Thank God, all true laborers with Christ partake more or less of the same mood and may learn the secret which the Saviour unfolds to those who love him. George Herbert sets forth the true secret of lifting all our labor out of slavery into bright and joyous exertion in the song,

"Teach me, my God and King,
In all things thee to see,
And what I do in anything,
To do it as for thee.

"Not rudely, as a beast,
To run into an action;
But still to make thee prepossessed,
And give it thy perfection.

"A man that looks on glass,
On it may stay his eye,
Or, if he pleaseth, through it pass,
And then the heav'n espy.

"All may of thee partake;
Nothing can be so mean
Which with this tincture (for thy sake)
Will not grow bright and clean.

"A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine,
Who sweeps a room as for thy cause,
Makes that and th' action fine.

"This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold;
For that which God doth touch and own,
Cannot for less be told."

It is impossible for us to live and do our work in such a spirit and in such fellowship without the aroma of our service being unconsciously a blessing to other people. One hot day in July, 1839, while Dr. Hamlin, the president of Roberts College, in Constantinople, was passing the custom house, a crowd attracted his attention. He pressed his way through the people and found a poor sailor lying by the side of a wall apparently dying of cholera. "Do you speak English?" asked Dr. Hamlin. "Yes," said the man, following the word with an oath. "Are you an Englishman or an American?" "American," with another oath. He evidently could

not talk at all without swearing. Dr. Hamlin rescued the man from the brutal crowd and removed him to one of the mission houses. For several weeks he was kindly nursed and visited by the missionaries. He finally recovered and sailed for America. On the morning he left he called to bid his new friends good-bye. Lingering for a moment outside the door he said, "I have been a very wicked man and have done all the evil I could in the world, and now I am going to do all the good I can."

Three years after Dr. Hamlin received a letter from him, which thus began: "DEAR MR. HAMLIN: Thank God, I still survive the ded! I am here workin' and blowin' the trumpet on the Eri Kanal."

When Dr. Goodell, an old missionary, saw the letter, he asked that he might begin the answer, and, taking a sheet of paper, wrote, "DEAR MR. BROWN: Blow away, brother, blow! Yours in blowing the same Gospel trumpet, WILLIAM GOODELL."

Twenty-five years after Dr. Hamlin, while dining at a hotel in Paris, was accosted by an American gentleman. "I am just from Honolulu, Sandwich Islands," said the gentleman. "I have known a man there by the name of Brown who has done a great deal of good among the sailors. He can go everywhere and anywhere with the Bible. He has told me how he was dying, 'a blasphemous dog,' in the streets of Constantinople, and you picked him up and saved him, soul and body. Is this all true, or is it in part a sailor's long yarn?" It was all true. The bringing of this wicked man into daily association with these men and women who were toiling in

loving fellowship with the pure Christ saved "a blasphemous dog," and sent him "blowin' the Gospel trumpet" along the "Eri Kanal," and afterward not only among the islands of the Pacific, but all around the world on a blessed mission to the often forgotten and neglected sailor.

The glorious promise is that if we become laborers together with God and work in fellowship with Christ, we shall become like him so that in the great crowning day, when we see him as he is, we shall have his likeness and he will own us as his. The story is told of a beautiful statue which stood in the market place of a great city. It was that of a Greek slave girl, but she was well dressed, tidy, and handsome. One day there passed by a dirty, forlorn, ragged slave girl. Her eyes fell on the statue. She stopped and gazed upon it in rapt admiration. She went home and washed her face and combed her hair. The next time she could go that way about her toil she stopped in passing to look at the statue. And that day when she went home she washed her tattered clothes and mended them. And so it went on. She never missed an opportunity to look at the statue, and every time she saw it she went away to imitate some of its beauties, until the dirty, ragged slave was completely transformed, and became herself a figure of beauty. So Christ comes into the midst of our toiling world. He is born under our conditions and is cradled in a home of poverty. He grows to manhood in the family of a carpenter. His hands are hardened by daily labor. He is tempted and tried in all points like as we are. He is one of us. And yet he is the pure one, the

spotless one, the ever-hopeful one, the conqueror. As we work beside him we catch his spirit, earth loses its tyranny over us, the sweet reasonableness of his spirit masters our hearts. The noble ambition which makes him tireless we breathe, and so day by day as the years go on, working in glad fellowship with the divine-human Christ, we are transformed. We are toilers yet, we yet dwell in the earth, and the earthly winds still blow upon us; but toil is glorified, the earth is a stairway to paradise, and the winds are heavenly trade winds that are wafting us onward to our immortality.

VI.

The Fellowship of the Saints.

"A disciple is not above his master, nor a servant above his lord." —Matt. x, 24. (Revised Version.)

THE social life of the Christian centers in Jesus Christ. No more important fact can be impressed upon our minds and hearts than that. We are social beings. The people with whom we mingle from day to day, and especially those with whom we form intimate acquaintance, and to whom we look for sympathy and comfort, have marked influence upon our characters. To be a Christian is to put Jesus in the place of first friend. Not only must no one else be quite so near to us as he, but the fact that he is the center of our friendly circle must dictate the character of the associations and friendships we make. Any who have recently given their hearts to God and have come to acknowledge Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord cannot have it too strongly impressed upon their thought that nothing will so help them into a more intimate acquaintance with Christ, into a joyous and ever-ripening Christian experience, as the seeking of associations and friendships that shall be in harmony with the Christian life upon which they have entered. Many a man falls back into the world and loses his crown because he fails to cultivate fellowship with Christian people. If you are to grow in grace and joyous knowledge of Christ, you want

to get acquainted with those who love him and are seeking to live in a way that is pleasing to him. And yet, above all, Christ himself is to be your first friend. The great secret of a happy and strong Christian life, that shall grow in power as the years go on until you shall be a pillar in the temple of God, is constant association and fellowship with Jesus in daily meditation and prayer and purpose. We should look so constantly to Christ as the great support of our lives as to be able to sing with Mrs. Munroe:

"Awake, my soul! the early dawn is breaking!
Kneel to receive thy blessing and to pray,
Thou knowest not the trial that awaits thee;
Soul, canst thou bear it bravely through the day?
There is One standing even on the threshold;
He longs to share it with thee, all the way.
Jesus is passing by—
Speak to him!

"It is high noon. The sands of life are burning.
Soul, thou art thirsty, and thy feet are sore
From weary travel through a thorny pathway.
Come thou apart; thou needst not suffer more.
A friend draws near bearing a brimming chalice;
'Tis life eternal; drink for evermore!
Jesus is passing by—
Speak to him!

"Life's fiercest storm sweeps o'er thy little day;
Thou hast no power to face the billows wild.
Hearken, my soul! Amid the surges' roar
A voice is saying, 'Fear thou not, my child!'
'Tis he who crossed the waves of Galilee,
Who walked life's sea, all calm and undefiled.
'Tis Jesus passing by —
Speak to him!

"'Twas light at eventide; the last pale rays
Have faded now from western sea and sky.
The storm is hushed and the dark waves are still.
Lift up thine eyes! the Saviour cometh nigh
To cheer the midnight gloom. See, in his face
Shineth the dawn of thine eternity!
Jesus is passing by—
Speak to him!

The Saviour used the words of our text during his ministry to point out, on several occasions, three pivotal points where we are sure of fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. And when we are in fellowship with him we are sure to be in fellowship with all those who sincerely love and trust him. This thought so filled the heart of John that he wrote to his friends in his first epistle: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ: and these things we write, that our joy may be fulfilled. And this is the message which we have heard from him, and announce unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

The first point of fellowship which Christ sets forth is that of *endurance*. In this tenth chapter of Matthew Christ warns his disciples that by entering into fellowship with him they will become the objects of persecution and hatred. He shows them that the people who hate him will naturally despise

those who are his friends. But he comforts them by declaring that they shall have no sorrow or trial or trouble of any kind to endure that he will not share it with them, and that if they are faithful to him he will gird them about with a divine arm, and in the end, however severe the trial, they shall come off victorious. What a wonderfully strong picture is this which Christ sets before every one who will serve him! Every new convert ought to commit it to memory and repeat it every morning before going out to the day's work: "A disciple is not above his master, nor a servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household! Fear them not therefore: . . . and be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father: but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows. Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." I trust that every one who has recently come into the fellowship of this church has come with the determination to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ. You must remember that the Scripture promise is, "In your *patience* ye shall *win*

your souls." Christian patience is very different from that barbaric stoicism which endures because it must. The Christian can afford to be patient because he is the child of the King, and knows that even things that seem to be adverse, and which are to be endured rather than to be enjoyed, are yet being woven together in the great loom of life under the divine direction for his good.

A second point of fellowship which Christ emphasizes is the fellowship of *service.* This is very clearly set forth in the thirteenth chapter of St. John's gospel, where it is recorded that after the Saviour had eaten the feast of the passover with his disciples he arose from the supper and, having laid aside his outer garments, took a towel and girded himself, procured a basin of water and began to wash the disciples' feet and wipe them with the ends of the towel with which he was girded. And when he came to Peter that impetuous man thought it was not proper that the Lord should so humiliate himself as to wash his feet; but Jesus tenderly argued with him and showed that he could have no part with him except through this fellowship of service; and when Peter understood it his opposition melted in a moment, and he cried out, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Again, when they were struggling among themselves as to who should have the highest place, Christ rebuked them by saying that the Son of man himself came not to be ministered unto, but to minister to the necessity of others, and whoever among them was ambitious to be great, let him be a great servant.

We may always be sure that we are in fellowship

with Jesus Christ when, with honest hearts, we are seeking to do the work which he loves and in which he is interested. Of course it is possible for men to work side by side and have no real fellowship in their work. We want to so study the will of Christ concerning humanity that we may work to accomplish the same results which he is seeking to bring about. There are some kinds of service where we are always sure we have the sympathy of Jesus and are not far from him. One is where we are trying by kindness and friendliness toward other Christians to build up a loving relation in the Church. We know Christ is always trying to bring about that. His command to us is that we shall love one another as the Father loves him and as he loves us. Whenever, therefore, we are seeking to be peacemakers in the Church, are patiently and kindly trying to remove misunderstandings and allay discords and make fellow-Christians love each other more, we may be sure we are working with Christ.

Another point where we can be sure the Saviour is with us is when we are seeking to save the lost. When any one has fallen into sin, and there is a disposition to let him pick himself up the best he can, or even to give him the kick of a contemptuous word, and we deny ourselves and, entering into and sharing the spirit of Jesus, undertake to restore such a one and bolster him up again in the good way, we may know that Christ will be with us.

The other point of fellowship to which I wish to call your attention is the fellowship of *character*. In the sixth chapter of Luke's gospel these words of the Master are recorded: "The disciple is not

above his master, but every one when he is perfected shall be as his master." It is toward that sublime ideal that we are to struggle. Our mission here on earth is to become like Jesus Christ. Whatever is excellent and beautiful in the character of Jesus, that we must seek from day to day to assimilate into our own characters. We are to have the mind that was in him. We must seek to inwardly digest by thought and meditation and prayer the commandments of Jesus, and exemplify them in our conversation and our actions, so that our lives shall adorn and beautify the very thought of Jesus among the people who know us. We must never be satisfied with standing still, but seek by loving service and fellowship with Jesus to be transformed into his image from glory to glory.

Some of you remember the story which the elder Hawthorne tells of the great stone face up among the New England hills. The boy Ernest, sitting one evening with his mother and looking off at that noble profile, heard for the first time the tradition that there was coming some day a man with the same gracious features, a man who would in his own character embody those graces of personality which would give him a right to such a face. The old legend sank deep into the heart of the boy, and he watched the strange and beautiful face all through the days of his boyhood, and on through youth and middle age, and finally into old age. Three times it had been rumored that the man who should resemble the great stone face was coming, and thrice Ernest had been disappointed. Yet every day of his life, without knowing it, he had been influenced

in his conduct and in his thought by that strangely noble stone face outlined against the blue sky. Again, and again, and again, as the years went on, he had looked with reverence, almost with worship, on the benign features of that rudely chiseled face and thought about the beauty of the character which the man who should resemble it should possess. And all the while he had been trying to do his duty day by day and faithfully fill his little niche in the common life about him. One day a famous poet came to see him. They went out at the setting of the sun, and Ernest, then an old man, addressed the people, as was his wont, upon some simple but beautiful theme. As the rays of the setting sun fell first on the great stone face and then on Ernest's face, the poet exclaimed, "Why, Ernest himself is like the great stone face." So as we live in fellowship with Jesus Christ, bearing the cross with him, walking with him daily in service as he goes about doing good, as we study his personality, as we enter into his joy in saving the lost and in bringing gladness to the sorrowful heart, keeping ever before us his character as the one altogether lovely, we shall become like him, and shall enter even here into the realization of that most precious promise of our immortality that there we shall be like him.

VII.

A Man as a Hiding Place.

"A man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."—Isa. xxxii, 2.

WHILE every good man in some degree fills this picture outline, and it was intended, no doubt, to portray the blessings that were to come to Israel through the reign of the good king Hezekiah, there is only one man in the history of the ages who altogether fulfills that description, and that is Jesus Christ. And whatever primary reference the prophet had to Hezekiah, every local and temporary victory achieved by the pious and reverent Hebrew was to him a type of the Messiah, the great Conqueror that was to come. The Hebrew Messiah has come, and he is our Christ, the Saviour of the world. Christ is not only the greatest man that ever lived, but in him is the divine power necessary to give life, inspiration, defense, and rest of soul to other men. Dr. Hillis, of Chicago, called attention in a recent discourse to that oft-quoted desire which Plato expressed to have the moral law become a living personage, that mankind, thus beholding the law of God incarnate, might be charmed at her beauty. Plato felt that the abstract law could not kindle the soul into enthusiastic love and devotion. And he further calls attention to the fact that as planets are removed from the sun their light and heat lessens, their flowers fade, their fruits lack lustre,

and, their summers shorten. Thus the astronomers assure us that Neptune stands in the midst of perpetual ice, in eternal winter, without tree or bird or human voice; but as our earth approaches the direct rays of the sun its forests wave in beauty, its flowers exhale fragrance, and its harvests grow heavy. So, as the Sun of righteousness arose upon our human life, with healing in his wings, the heart of humanity was warmed, man's affections were strengthened, his reason developed, and the whole horizon of his life broadened and enlarged. How different the attitude of Christ toward humanity, and the aroused humanity toward Christ, compared with any other men! The philosopher may analyze and describe a man as an anatomist does a skeleton, a chemist a potato, or a geologist a stratum of rock; but Jesus Christ brings to bear a wealth of love upon humanity, puts his shoulders under our burdens, sheds tears of sympathy in response to our troubles, and dies upon the cross for our redemption. Great writers like Dante and Milton and Shakespeare have inspired and quickened the intellect, but Jesus Christ lifts us up into a new life and imparts vitality from his own abounding nature. The world has been rich in heroes who have been able to arouse popular enthusiasm. The French troops that were brought out to fight against Napoleon deserted their standards and ran to their old commander. Garibaldi was the idol of Italy, and well did he deserve it. When General Grant returned from his trip around the world every city from San Francisco across the continent vied with others in hero worship to the great general.

"But the divine Man never stood forth in full proportion until Jesus Christ stepped upon this planet. What strength! What gentleness! Behold his exquisite sympathy! Behold the instinct of confidence that drew little children to his arms! How did men, defiled within and without, throng upon him, while his presence wrought the miracle of miracles in cleansing them! Then for the first time in history did disheveled ones so feel the beauty of goodness that an irresistible enthusiasm drew them about him to kiss the very hem of his garment. All the excellences of life, and more, unite in him—the orator's persuasive speech; the artist's love of beauty; the scholar's passion for truth; the patriot's love of country! His also is more than the love of mother, friend; for this is the love of Saviour. To-day he rises over each soul in such majesty of excellence as to include the excellences of everything in heaven and everything in earth. As the clouds sometimes, after hanging for days and nights in the atmosphere, at length come together, so let all that is deepest and richest and sweetest in men's thought and affection pour itself out before him who is worthy of the world's anthem. For his mind will guide, his mercy forgive, his love redeem, his hand lead—not into the abyss of death, but unto the heavenly heights. He who with Dante looks upward to-day may behold the Saviour's divine chariot 'sweeping along the confines of heaven, a sweet light above it, its wheels almost blocked with flowers.'"

The first suggestion in this wondrously beautiful Scripture is that of *Refuge*—"a man shall be as a

hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest." To appreciate the strength of this figure one must surround himself in imagination with the physical conditions of the East, and know something of the danger of wind and tempest on an oriental desert. Lamartine, in his volume of *Travels in the East*, tells us that one morning when they arose early and went out to saddle their dromedaries they found to their great surprise that the animals had their heads buried in the sand, and it was not possible to draw them out. They called the Bedouins of the caravan to their aid, who informed them that the instinct of the camels led them to conceal their heads thus in order to escape the simoom; that their doing so was an infallible indication of that terrible tempest of the desert which would not be long in breaking loose, and that they could not proceed on the journey without meeting certain death. The camp was thrown into the greatest bustle, and they had scarcely gotten their beautiful Arabian horses under cover before the tempest burst. Impetuous blasts of wind hurled clouds of red and burning sand in eddies, and overthrew all upon whom their fury fell; or, heaping up sand hills, they buried all that had strength to resist being carried away. If at this period any part of the body were exposed the flesh was scorched as if a hot iron had touched it. The hurricane blew in all its fury for six hours, and gradually subsided during six hours more. When at last they ventured to leave the tents a frightful spectacle presented itself: five children, two women, and a man were lying dead in the still burning sand, and several Bedouins had their

faces blackened and entirely calcined as if by a blast from a fiery furnace. That is the kind of a tempest to which the sins and sorrows that beset human life may be compared, and from which Jesus Christ is the only sure covert and hiding place. When I think of this it does not seem strange or wonderful to me that the symbol of the cross should be regarded with what seems to us as a superstitious reverence among many people.

Over the door of a house in a little village in Norway there is a stork carved in wood, and this is the tale that the people tell about it: In that house, many years ago, there lived a boy named Conrad. Every summer a stork made its nest near by, and, as Conrad often fed it, the stork became quite tame. When Conrad grew to be a young man he ran away to sea against his mother's wish. After Conrad had gone the stork came back as usual every summer to Norway from its long journey to the south, and Conrad's mother was kind to it, and fed it, because it reminded her of her wandering son. Poor Conrad had a hard time on the ocean. As he was sailing along on the Mediterranean Sea some pirates attacked the vessel and captured all on board. Conrad was told that he must be their slave unless he had some rich friends who would redeem him. He had no rich friends, and so he was doomed to cruel slavery. One day, while at his toil, he saw a stork flying above him. It reminded him of his own stork away in Norway. He whistled to it, and the stork knew the sound and flew down to him, and Conrad was delighted to find it was the very same bird he had

petted and fed in his old home. The next day the bird came again, and day after day for a long while Conrad and the stork ate their dinner together. As the time drew near for the stork to move to his summer home, Conrad thought he would send a message to his mother. So he wrote a letter and fastened it securely to the stork's leg. After a few days Conrad's mother found her summer visitor at the door, and fastened to his leg she found the letter. How glad she was to know that her boy was alive! And the poor old mother never ceased her exertions till she had raised a large sum of money and sent and redeemed him. And when Conrad returned to his old home he had this stork carved over the doorway.

But it was out of a bondage worse than that that Jesus Christ came to open for us a refuge and a hiding place. He made of his own life a covert for us from the tempest. He interposed between us and danger his own person and bore our stripes upon the cross. He bought our poor, guilty souls at the price of his own blood. How shrewdly Paul reasons that, as while we were yet sinners our heavenly Father gave Christ to die for us, how shall he not, now that we are ransomed and redeemed, freely give us all things.

A Southern lady tells a story of the old slavery days which wonderfully illustrates this thought of the divine care and ownership over those who yield themselves up to the heavenly ransom, to be not their own, but to belong to him who has redeemed them. This lady says that she once had occasion to give one of her slaves a piece of work to do that

required him to stand outside of a window on a long plank that was held steady by some one inside sitting upon the other end. The slave was a little afraid, but finally said, "Well, missus, I'll do it if you'll sit right dar all de time you own self." The slave's wife was present, and the mistress said, "Won't it do if Mandy sits there? She will be sure not to let you fall." "No, no, missus," replied the slave, "I doan't trust Mandy. She's only my wife, and I'se feared she just done forgit and git up. But you'se my missus, and I 'longs to you, and in course you'se gwine to keep me safe." If such a conception of the interest of ownership in the ignorant mind of the slave could give him an assurance of refuge from danger, how much more ought we to find a perfect refuge in him whose hands were voluntarily nailed to the cross in our behalf.

Whatever may be the tempest that beats upon you this day—whether it be disappointments in business, hard and bitter losses and defeats that seem to crush to the earth your fondest plans; or those more tender sorrows that come from the sickness or suffering or death of those near and dear to you by ties of kindred or friendship or love; or the fierce wind of temptation; or the blighting simoom of sin and vicious appetite and passions; or the fear of coming judgment—I offer to you the only sure refuge for the distressed and threatened human soul, the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you have read that beautiful book, *Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush*, you remember the sweet little story entitled "His Mother's Sermon." The

young minister had come to preach his first sermon in the kirk of Drumtochty. He was fresh from college and full of enthusiasm to deliver the kind of discourse that would be expected of a young scholar who had carried off the university honors. He had very carefully prepared a sermon in which he had discussed the trend and outlook of theological thought, and after having been well rehearsed it lay upon his table waiting for the eventful Sunday morning. But the minister's good Scotch aunty, to whom he had revealed the kind of sermon he was expecting to preach, who was a saint with that firm grasp of holy truth and tender mysticism whose combination is the charm of Scottish piety, wore a troubled face. She remembered how five years before she had seen the young preacher stand by his mother's deathbed and heard that good woman give him her last request: "The first day ye preach in yir ain kirk, speak a gude word for Jesus Christ; an', John, I'll hear ye that day, though ye'll no see me, and I'll be satisfied." As the young preacher saw the shadow on his aunt's face he said, "What are you thinking about, aunt? Are you afraid of my theology?" To which the brave, good woman replied, "Dinna be angry wi' me, John, but a'm concerned aboot Sabbath, for a've been praying ever syne ye were called to Drumtochty that it micht be a great day, and that I micht see ye comin' tae yir people, laddie, wi' the beauty o' the Lord upon ye according tae the auld prophecy: 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace.' It's no for me tae

advise ye whom am only a simple auld woman, who ken's neethin' but her Bible and the Catechism, and it's no that a'm feared for the new views, or aboot yir faith, for I aye mind that ther's mony things the Speerit hes still tae teach us, and I ken weel the man that follows Christ will never lose his way in ony thicket. But it's the fouk, John, a'm anxious aboot, the flock o' sheep the Lord hes given ye tae feed for him. Ye maun mind, laddie, that they're no clever and learned like what ye are, but jist plain country fouk, ilka ane wi'y his ain temptation, an' a' sair trachled wi' mony cares o' this world. They'll need a clear word tae comfort their herts and show them the way everlasting. Ye'll say what's richt, nae doot o' that, and a'body'll be pleased wi' ye, but, O laddie, be sure ye say a gude word for Jesus Christ." The minister's face whitened as he rose hastily and went to the door, but in going out he gave his aunt an understanding look, such as passes between people who have stood together in a great sorrow. The son had not forgotten his mother's request. He went alone to pray, and after a great struggle the sermon he had intended to preach found its way into the fire, and during the Saturday, in a spirit of heart-searching communion with God, he prepared another message, fresh from heaven, that melted the strong hearts of the Highlanders and opened a vision of the face of Jesus Christ to his eager listeners.

So I would to God I might say "a gude word for Jesus Christ" to you all this day. If any of you are in sore trouble, then let me tell you that he is "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." If

any of you are tired and weary, let me picture him with outstretched and appealing arms and recall his tender words, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And if any are troubled and sick at heart because of your wandering and sin, let me help you to hear again his tender assurance, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

We have also here a thought of *Refreshment*— "as rivers of water in a dry place." This is as strong a figure as the first. There is no suffering like that of thirst. There is no desolation to any land like that which comes from drought or lack of water. The great Desert of Sahara would soon gather soil and become a garden in fertility and beauty if it were traversed by streams of living water. How strong is the illustration in presenting to us the gracious influences of Christ upon the lives of those who find refuge in him. In all the trials and difficulties of life, however hard and severe they may be, he is a constant source of refreshment and comfort to those who live in friendship and communion with him. The true Christian has the burdens and trials and temptations of life to endure in many ways as other people have them, but he is constantly refreshed by the water of life flowing through earth's dry places, making trees and flowers to bud and bloom, and inspiring many a chorus of singing birds that with their sweet music nerve the soul to labor and endure with patience and hope. Some one has written a very beautiful poem illustrating this truth. It is entitled "The Song and the Burden:"

"Thou didst grant me a song, O Lord,
A song of sweetest melody and grace;
And thou didst say unto me, 'Sing the song;'
But thou laidst a burden on me, Lord,
It seemed too great by far for me to bear;
But thou saidst, 'Sing the song; the burden bear—
The song and the burden!'

"The song was rapturous, heavenly sweet, as if
By angel voices whispered choiring low
The natal hymn of that new earth to be.
My heart leapt up with joy and glad surprise
As now I caught the thrilling pulse and cried,
'I'll sing the song, but the burden, alas!—
The song and the burden.'

"Yet thou saidst, 'Sing the song; the burden bear,'
But still my heart was all so weary, sad,
I cried, 'Remove, O Lord, the burden drear,
Then I will sing the song, and O, so sweet,
The world will hear, and hearing heed, and rise,
New-born, to higher being, noble life—
The song, not the burden.'

"Again thou saidst, 'Sing, and bear; my grace is
Enough; thou shalt sing and thou shalt bear,
And, bearing, sweeter sing; thy fellow too
Shall hear, and, hearing, quick new heart shall take
And nobler be. I'll tune thy heart to sing,
And thou shalt sing the song, the burden bear—
The song and the burden.'

"I sang the song, and as I sang, it sweet
And sweeter grew, and they that listened heard,
With eager look and ear did catch the strain,
And swell the anthem, ringing loud, to gates
Of heaven and heart of earth tear-stained—the song
Complete alone with sorrow's trembling chords—
The song and the burden.

"And so I bore the burden, sang the song,
And, singing thus, the burden lighter grew,
The song much sweeter far, and if, perchance,
The soft'ning tone of burden's strain were still,
The music lost its power, the charm had fled;
And so I sing and, singing pray, 'O Lord,
The song and the burden!'"

We have here also a very beautiful picture of *Rest*—"as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." The picture suggests one tired out and weary with travel, who has found a camping place where the sun cannot reach him, where the wind and the tempest cannot annoy; a place of peace, where all fear may be cast out. How deep is the lingering of the human heart for peace! The author of *Twenty Years on the Afghan Border* tells us that an Afghan—who afterward became a faithful Christian helper—on a visit to Calcutta heard an Englishman preach there in a bazar. The sermon was in Hindustani, and to the Afghan entirely unintelligible. But there was one word which the speaker repeated over and over, a word common to all oriental languages—*araam*, "rest," or peace. The word awakened longings in that poor Afghan's soul, as it does everywhere to-day, among the poorest and lowest as well as among the most learned and affluent. At last the poor fellow was so troubled that he sought out the English preacher, and with the help of an interpreter learned that he had been preaching from the text, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And guided by that one word "rest" the Afghan was brought to Christ. Are there not some who listen to me now whose hearts are un-

satisfied and whose restless souls feel the great need of the "shadow of a great rock in a weary land?"

"But," somebody says, "a rock is stationary, and indicates a comfort for people who have leisure and time to compose themselves; but my life is one constant struggle against adverse conditions. I am a stranger and a pilgrim, and must push my way ever onward, and have no time for such repose." To any such troubled soul let me recall Paul's description of Christ. When speaking of the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness he says, "They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ." The "great rock" with its restful shadow shall go with you, and be a wall about you, and comfort you in every time of trial and necessity. It is this living rock of comfort which I preach to you. A man, thy Brother, with a heart of infinite tenderness, who shall walk the way of life with you, shall be a hiding place when the wind of trial is fiercest. His friendship shall be a covert into which you shall flee when the roaring tempest affrights you. And when the way leads through deserts of unfruitful experience, of hopes that wither, of ambitions that are blighted, of plans that are defeated, his tender brotherhood shall be like a stream of refreshing water in that barren place. When the sun of persecution or of competition beats down with pitiless severity, and the heart aches and the shoulders are weary, the massive nobility and majesty of his manhood, and the gentleness of his tender heart shall be as "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

VIII.

The Fever of Life and the Master's Touch.

"He touched her hand, and the fever left her."—Matt. viii, 15.

JESUS was always going about doing good. He was ever seeking, not only for those who needed him, but for those who needed him most. He comes to this home and finds the worthy mother sick with fever, and ere he sits down to rest, or to accept refreshment, or to be entertained, he seeks to bring to the household the blessing that was within his power:

"He touched her hand, and the fever left her,
He touched her hand, as he only can,
With the wondrous skill of the great Physician,
With the tender touch of the Son of man,
And the fever pain in the throbbing temples
Died out with the flush on brow and cheek;
And the lips that had been so parched and burning
Trembled with thanks she could not speak;
And the eyes, where the fever-light had faded,
Looked up, by her grateful tears made dim,
And she rose and ministered in her household,—
She rose and ministered unto him.

"'He touched her hand, and the fever left her.'
O blessed touch of the Man divine!
So beautiful to arise and serve him
When the fever is gone from your life and mine.
It may be the fever of restless serving,
With heart all thirsty for love and praise,
And eyes all aching and strained with yearning
Toward self-set goals in the future days.

"Or it may be fever of spirit anguish,
Some tempest of sorrow that dies not down,
Till the cross at last is in meekness lifted,
And the head stoops low for the thorny crown.
Or it may be a fever of pain and anger,
When the wounded spirit is hard to bear,
And only the Lord can draw forth the arrows
Left carelessly, cruelly rankling there.

"Whatever the fever, his touch can heal it;
Whatever the tempest, his voice can still,
There is only rest as we seek his pleasure,
There is only peace as we choose his will.
And some day, after life's fitful fever,
I think we shall say, in the home on high,
'If the hands that he touched but did his bidding,
How little it matters what else went by!'
Ah, Lord! thou knowest us altogether,
Each heart's sore sickness, whatever it be;
Touch thou our hands! Let the fever leave us,
And so shall we minister unto thee!"

As we have been following the poet, many of us have, doubtless, been conscious of the special fever which is burning out the best possibilities of service from our own nature. How many fevers there are preying upon our poor human nature! With many it is the fever of *worldliness*. The enthusiasm which was intended for the highest things is squandered on the world that now is. Here is a story of Gladstone which is new to me: Once Mr. Gladstone had been cutting down a tree in the presence of a large company of people, gathered from curiosity to see the great man at his exercise. When the tree had fallen, and the prime minister and some of his family who were with him were moving away, there was a rush for the chips, to carry them off as souve-

nirs. One enthusiastic man secured a big piece of wood and exclaimed: "Hey, lads, when I dee this shall go in my coffin!" Then cried his wife, a shrewd, motherly old woman, with a merry twinkle in her eye, "Sam, my lad, if thou'd worship God as thou worships Gladstone thou'd stand a better chance of going where thy chip wouldna burn!" There are a good many people who throw into their political partisanship and their worldly avocation the vital enthusiasm and devotion which belongs to the greater interests of the spiritual life. When such a man comes into contact with Jesus Christ, it does not make him less public-spirited nor rob him of his business energy, but it quiets the feverish unrest of his relation to the world by revealing to him the immeasurable superiority of spiritual things.

With some the bane of life is the fever of *egotism* and *bigotry*. Some one tells the story of an old woman, a comic bundle of prejudices and misjudgments, who used to say sometimes, with amusing perplexity, "I don't know how it is—I can't understand it—but somehow or other I always seem to be right." What may have been in her case a comparatively innocent foible, is often in harder natures the cause of an immense amount of misery and cruel oppression. If we look back through history we shall find at the bottom of nearly every persecution on account of belief since the world began somebody who is conscientious enough, but who is the engine of torture for multitudes of his fellow-beings through the fatal fever of egotism and bigotry which has burned the conviction into his

brain that he is always right. This kind of fever often exhibits itself in a stubbornness which reminds us of the little Crown Prince of Germany, who was amusing himself by trying to make a donkey draw a cart. The donkey was stubborn, and would not go. "Your donkey has a good deal of will power," called out the emperor, who had been watching the struggle between his little son and the obstinate beast. "O, no, papa," replied the little prince, "it isn't his will power that troubles me, it is his won't power—he won't go." A great many people imagine they have a good deal of will power, when they are mistaken; all they have is a stubborn "won't power," which is the manifestation of a fevered egotism. Perhaps to no one does the touch of Jesus Christ mean more in the softening of temper and disposition, and the revelation of Christian graces, than to such a one as that.

With another it is the fever of *greed.* So terrible is this that the Scripture declares that the love of money is the root of all evil. Please notice that it is not the money itself that is denounced; but the love of money, the fever of money-getting, which is so dangerous. Those who are the victims of this fever have their attention drawn away from spiritual things until, oftentimes, their affections become as firmly fixed on the track of earthly things as the deerhound's nose is to the fresh trail where he has scented game. Notwithstanding the large gifts which ever and anon are announced by men of great wealth for purposes of education and benevolence, it is still true that it is exceedingly rare for a man who has become rich to continue to give as largely

in proportion as he did when he was only moderately well off. The reason for this undoubtedly is that a man gets the fever of greed, and it grows upon him as riches multiply. The fever of greed burns out the noblest intuitions of the soul, so that the man who is fully given over to money-getting as an aim and end of life becomes, strange as it may seem, twin brother in spirit and soul to the pauper who has lost his self-respect and gotten the consent of his own mind to be a beggar.

A remarkable illustration of the truth of this statement may be found in the story which is related of Baron James de Rothschild by Eugene Delacroix, the famous French painter. The painter was on one occasion dining with Rothschild, when he remarked that for some time past he had vainly sought a head to serve as a model for that of a beggar in a painting on which he was engaged, and that, as he gazed at his host's features, the idea suddenly struck him that the very head he desired was before him. Rothschild, being a great admirer of art, readily consented to sit for him as a beggar. The next day at the studio Delacroix placed a tunic round his shoulders and made him pose as if he were resting on the steps of an ancient Roman temple. In this attitude he was discovered by one of the artist's favorite pupils, who, struck by the surpassing excellence of the model, congratulated his master on having at last found exactly what he wanted. Indeed, so completely did the face of the richest man in the world, when robbed of its usual environments, have the expression of the beggar that the young artist, having his sympathies aroused,

and supposing that the model had been brought in from some church porch, seized an opportunity when his master's eyes were turned to slip a piece of money into the beggar's hand. A lifelong fever had burned its piteous incarnation into the money-getter's face.

Much of the crime which destroys promising business careers is the result of this fever of greed. Sometimes it takes such violent possession of a man that it becomes a frenzy, a mania, a delirium, that sweeps him away from all the moorings of conscience. It blunts his moral sense as to right and wrong when it concerns the use of other people's money. Almost every great business scandal which ends in suicide or a defaulter's cell in the penitentiary illustrates the fact that very few defaulters start out with the deliberate intention of retaining permanently that which is not their own; they mean to use it for a while and then restore it. They argue that they can make something for themselves and do others no harm; but the fever grows, and it draws them on, and on, and on, until, whether they succeed or not, they are ruined past hope. How great is the need for the touch of a divine hand on the feverish brain of many a tempted and misguided business man! The business man who thinks he cannot do business according to the Golden Rule is making the greatest blunder of his life. There is no other rule by which he can build up a business so impregnable to attack. How many homes in this city would be made happier, and how many sleepless couches would become the places of peaceful slumber, if Jesus could come there as he

came to that business man called Zaccheus so long ago!

With some it is the fever of *worldly pleasure*. Notice, not the pleasure itself. God has so made the universe, and so fitted us to it, that the sights and sounds and harmonies which constantly come in through the windows of our senses give harmless and healthful pleasure to every healthy man or woman. But the fever of pleasure-seeking as the great aim of life may be, and very often is, as dangerous and demoralizing in its influence on the character as the fever of money-getting. Many deadly and dangerous sins are hidden under the guise of pleasure. Dr. Parkhurst, of *Zion's Herald*, says that sin as a caterpillar is bad enough; but sin as a butterfly is a thousand times worse. The butterfly, for all its gorgeous coloring, is only a caterpillar with wings. The little bird sees through the guise and knows it is only a worm, and makes a meal off it, fine clothes and all. That was a good old rule on which Methodism grew up, which pledged us to take no pleasures that we could not enjoy in the name of the Lord Jesus. There is an old legend of an enchanted cup filled with poison and put treacherously into a king's hands. He signed the sign of the cross and named the name of God over the cup, and it shivered to pieces in his grasp. My friends, are you willing to stand that test in the domain of the pleasures of your daily life? Or is it true that if you were to name the name of Christ over many a cup of intoxicating pleasure of which you are eager to drink the result would be to scatter the glittering fragments at your

feet and spill the poison on the ground? I beg of you to shun as you would a pestilence any enjoyment, however it may fascinate you, which you cannot lift up before the pure eyes of Christ and think of him with pleasure while you pursue it. If the thought of Christ banishes the pleasure which tempts you, then you may rest assured that, notwithstanding all its sugared seductions, it is full of deadly poison for your soul, for your nobler self, and at the last it will bite like a serpent and sting like an adder.

When Christ comes into close touch and communion with our hearts the fever leaves us, and peace and strength and beauty come back to us. There is a legend, whether new or old I cannot tell, that once there came to Nazareth a traveling bazaar. Its tents were pitched in a meadow. One long, narrow, brown tent, in which all the dazzling wares of an oriental bazaar were arranged in booths on either side, made a miniature street. At each end of the great tent were smaller ones where the jugglers and the snake-charmers drew in the curious crowds. When the place was filled with the bargaining multitude there arose clear and distinct above the din a boy's voice—a pure, melodious, pathetic voice: "Lilies! lilies! lilies of Nazareth!" A hush fell on the crowd. There stood a boy of about twelve years, evidently fresh from the hand of a loving mother, his dark hair brushed in abundant waves back from a broad forehead. Great eyes looked innocently, lovingly about upon the novel scene. He was clothed in a spotlessly white tunic, and his arms were full of the famous lilies of Naz-

areth. Again rose that clear, appealing voice: "Lilies! lilies! lilies of Nazareth!" and he began to walk through the crowd handing a stem of lilies to every one who would take it. Some of the people said, "It is the young prophet." Others said, "It is Mary's strange son." Some took the branch of lilies from his hand with reverent thankfulness. Some took them indifferently and tossed them aside. Others refused them with a frown; but the beautiful boy had the same winning smile and the same innocent look of love for every one. Those who took their stem of lilies reverently looked at them more and more intently, and by degrees drew away from the gay booths. One by one they slipped from the tent into the open air, and when they looked up into the clear blue sky and out on the beautiful foothills they drew a deep breath of refreshment, and, like the lilies in their hands, seemed to be at home again. They left the noisy, vulgar little show behind them, going across the meadow, singing as they went, where they stopped beside a great spring for a drink of its pure cold water. And they went to their homes, their hearts at peace, taking their lilies with them. The lilies of Nazareth are still waiting for reverent hands and the fountain of peace flows ever for those who have come to love their fragrance. How truly our own poet Whittier sings this truth in his song, "The Well of Loch Maree:"

"O restless heart and fevered brain,
Unquiet and unstable,
That holy well of Loch Maree
Is more than idle fable!

"Life's changes vex, its discords stun,
Its glaring sunshine blindeth,
And blest is he who on his way
That fount of healing findeth!

"The shadows of an humbled will
And contrite heart are o'er it;
Go read its legend—'Trust in God,'
On faith's white stone before it."

Those who are thus healed by the great Physician, and enter into soul communion with him in the fellowship of a loving and thankful ministry, shall be adorned with his spirit, and shall realize something of what is meant in the psalmist's prayer, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us." Some very interesting experiments have been made by scientists showing the effect of sound upon soft, yielding substances. An exceedingly delicate parchment is stretched upon four points, one at each corner, above a table. On this elastic membrane is spread a very thin layer of soft, fluid paste. Then a famous singer sings over it a popular song; and as the waves of air caused by the tones of the voice strike the apparatus the soft paste arranges itself into most beautiful forms of vegetable life, baskets of fruits, and even miniature landscapes. The tones of music heard by the ear are transferred into flowers seen by the eye. Each note creates a flower pattern of its own. One note breathes into life a tiny daisy that opens its eye in seeming wonder at the sound; at the magic command of another note a fern like that of the wild wood unfolds itself; a third note reveals in answering film a charming violet; and as the highest and sweetest note of

all sounds the lily in its fair purity bends down its graceful head. Hugh MacMillan enthusiastically says, commenting on this marvel in science, revealing the close relation between song and flowers, that when Wordsworth in an exquisite line said of a little rustic maiden that the "beauty born of murmuring sound did pass into her face," it was thought to be a mere poetic idea; but this experiment of the scientists shows that it might well be an actual fact.

Something like that had been at work on the face which one of our poets tells about. A mother and her little daughter were shopping at Christmas time. There was a great crowd, and the counters were piled high with Christmas toys and fanciful things, when the little child, turning from the counter and the fascinating shelves to the people, suddenly grasped her mother's hand and eagerly whispered:

"'O that must be Santa Claus' sister,
She's got such a Christmas face.'

"I looked where her eyes had lighted,
And, lo! in a threadbare gown
Stood a queer, little, bent, old woman,
With a face that was wrinkled and brown.

"But the eyes that beamed out from it
Were radiant with love and joy
As, from 'mong all the beautiful objects,
She selected one poor, cheap toy.

"And the worn, brown face was illumined
With a smile of good will toward men
That told more plainly than words might,
She was keeping Christmas then.

"I glanced at the forms about me.
There were women in rich attire
Whose unearned gold enabled
The purchase of each desire.

"There were those of delicate feature,
Of gentle breeding and race;
But the queer, little, bent, old woman's
Was the only 'Christmas face.'"

How significant is the statement of the Scripture record which follows the account of this woman's cure—"She arose and ministered unto them." It is to a life of Christlike ministry we are called. It must have taken all that was commonplace and slavish out of the common ministry of housekeeping when the great Physician, who had but just healed her, was one of the group she served. It is the first thought of every healed soul to do something in return to show our gratitude to him who has healed us. The Saviour has assured us that we never need lack opportunity to do this, since a loving service rendered to the humblest and most needy of our brothers and sisters he receives as done unto himself.

Henry Van Dyke has recently written one of the sweetest books, in which he tells the story of "The Other Wise Man." The story is that when the three wise men whose record we have given us in the gospels started from their home in the East to find the birthplace of the King of the Jews, that they might worship him and bestow gifts upon him, there was another, a companion, a noble man who lived in the city of Ecbatana, among the mountains of Persia. These four men had communicated

with each other after they had discovered the star of Bethlehem, and it was agreed that three should watch at the ancient temple of the Seven Spheres at Borsippa, in Babylonia, and the other should watch at his home in the mountains. If the star shone again the three were to wait ten days at the temple before they set out for Jerusalem to see and worship the promised One who was to be born King of Israel.

The wise man among the Persian hills, fully believing the sign would come again, sold his house and all his possessions and bought three jewels —a sapphire, a ruby, and a pearl—to carry as a tribute to the King. He kept a splendid Arabian horse saddled and bridled. He kept the jewels in his girdle, and watched through the night until he saw the new star arise and glow in the blue vault of heaven. Then he bowed his head. He covered his brow with his hands. "It is the sign," he said. "The King is coming, and I will go to meet him."

All day and long into the night Artaban—for that was this wise man's name—rode his splendid horse, and so on day after day, until at nightfall of the tenth day he was beneath the shattered walls of populous Babylon. He was very weary and his horse was well-nigh spent, and he would gladly have turned into the city to find rest for them both. But he knew that it was three hours' journey yet to the temple of the Seven Spheres, and he must reach the place by midnight if he would find his comrades waiting. As he attempted to ride on his horse suddenly stood still before the body of a human being, and Artaban, dismounting, found one who was seem-

ingly dead; but, as he turned to mount his horse a long, faint, ghostly sigh came from the man's lips, and the brown, bony fingers closed convulsively on the hem of the Magian's robe and held him fast.

Artaban knew not what to do. He had no time to lose. If he stayed here even for an hour he would be too late to keep the tryst at the temple. But if he stayed life might be restored; if he went on the man would surely die. "God of truth and purity," he prayed, "direct me in the holy path, the way of wisdom which thou only knowest." Then he turned back to the sick man. He carried him to a little mound at the foot of a palm tree. He brought water and moistened his brow and lips. He took medicine from his girdle and ministered to him, and by the time the first beam of the sun sent its shadow over the land the sick man was able to go on his way, and Artaban rode swiftly toward the temple. But, alas, he saw no trace of his friends! He searched carefully, and at the edge of the terrace he saw, under a little cairn of broken bricks, a piece of parchment. He caught it up and read, "We have waited past the midnight and can delay no longer. We go to find the King. Follow us across the desert."

Almost in despair Artaban went back to Babylon and sold his beautiful sapphire to get means to fit out a caravan to follow his companions across the desert, where he might lay his ruby and his pearl at the feet of the King. At last he reached the little town of Bethlehem. He had traveled more rapidly than his companions, and, notwithstanding his lost time, it was only the third day after the three wise

men had come to that place, and had found Mary and Joseph, with the young child Jesus, and had laid their gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh at his feet.

Artaban entered a low stone cottage, where he heard the sound of a woman's voice singing softly, and found a young mother hushing her babe to rest. She told him of the strangers from the far East who had appeared in the village three days ago, and how they said that a star had guided them to the place where Joseph of Nazareth was lodging with his wife and her newborn child, and how they had paid reverence to the child and given him many rich gifts.

But suddenly, while they were talking, there came a noise of wild confusion and uproar in the streets of the village, a shrieking and wailing of women's voices, a clangor of brazen trumpets, a clashing of swords, and a desperate cry: "The soldiers! The soldiers of Herod! They are killing our children."

The young mother's face grew white with terror. She clasped her child to her bosom and crouched motionless in the darkest corner of the room, covering him with the folds of her robe lest he should wake and cry. But Artaban went quickly and stood in the doorway of the house, and when the soldiers rushed up to him with bloody swords he said to the captain, "I am waiting to give this jewel to the prudent captain who will leave me in peace." He held out the ruby in his hand; the wonderful stone glistened like a great drop of blood. The captain seized it and cried, "March on! There is no child here. The house is still."

Thirty-three years passed by and Artaban is in Jerusalem. He is worn and weary and ready to die, but still looking for the King. One day he hears the people talking about him and saying, "We are going to the place called Golgotha, outside the city walls, where there is to be an execution." "Have you not heard what has happened?" they inquire of him. "Two famous robbers are to be crucified, and with them another, called Jesus of Nazareth, a man who has done many wonderful works among the people, so that they love him greatly. But the priests and elders have said that he must die because he gave himself out to be the Son of God, and Pilate has sent him to the cross because he said that he was the 'King of the Jews.'"

You can imagine how Artaban's heart beat within his breast then as he pushed forward with eager steps, saying within himself, "The ways of God are stranger than the thoughts of men, and it may be that I shall find the King at last in the hands of his enemies, and shall come in time to offer my pearl for his ransom before he dies."

So the old man followed the multitude toward the gate of the city. But as he went a troop of Macedonian soldiers came down the street, dragging a young girl with torn dress and disheveled hair. The good man's mercy and compassion shone in his face, and the desperate girl jerked herself loose from the guard and threw herself at his feet. "Have pity on me," she cried, "for the sake of the God of purity! My father was a merchant of Parthia, but he is dead, and I am seized for his debts to be sold as a slave. Save me from worse than death!"

With trembling hands Artaban took his pearl from his bosom. Never had it seemed so luminous, so radiant, so full of tender, living luster. He laid it in the hand of the wretched girl. "This is thy ransom, daughter! It is the last of my treasures which I kept for the King."

While yet he spoke the awful earthquake of that day of agony shook the city in darkness and terror. The soldiers fled, reeling like drunken men. A heavy tile from a roof fell and struck the old man on the temple. He lay breathless and pale, with his good gray head resting on the young girl's shoulder and the blood trickling from the wound. As she bent over him, fearing that he was dead, there came a voice through the twilight, very small and still, like music sounding from a distance, in which the notes are clear but the words are lost. The girl turned to see if some one had spoken from the window above them, but she saw no one. Then the old man's lips began to move, as if in answer, and she heard him say in the Parthian tongue, "Not so, my Lord! For when saw I thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw I thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? When saw I thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? Three and thirty years have I looked for thee, but I have never seen thy face nor ministered to thee, my King!"

He ceased, and the sweet voice came again. And again the young girl heard it, very faintly and far away. But now it seemed as though she understood the words: "Verily I say unto thee, inasmuch

as thou hast done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, thou hast done it unto me."

A calm radiance of wonder and joy lighted the face of Artaban like the first ray of dawn on a snowy mountain peak. One long last breath of relief exhaled gently from his lips. His journey was ended. His treasures were accepted. The other wise man had found the King.

IX.

Eugene Field—A Poet with the Heart of a Child.*

"A little child shall lead them."—Isa. xi. 6.

HE who "spake as never man spake" made a little child the standard of human value. Once, when men were quarreling about who should be called greatest, he called to him a child, and setting the little fellow in their midst, said, Let the man who would be greatest among you become as simple minded, as gentle in spirit, and pure of heart as this little child.

To keep near childhood and simplicity is the supreme art of human living. The childlike heart and soul ought to continue through our lives. It may sound very lofty and great to be called "a man of the world," or "a woman of the world;" but if it means, as it so often does, a personality that has outgrown all the sweet and simple trusts and hopes and faiths and loves of childhood and home, and their tender fellowship, then it is a badge of deterioration, and not of promotion. Nothing is more to be deplored than to get, as we grow older, an ossified heart that has lost all its freshness, its spontaneity, its rejoicing in little things, its abounding interest in the simplicities of living, its glad delight in childhood and in children's prattle, and in the earnest questioning of their curious, opening minds.

*A Thanksgiving Day address.

Eugene Field kept the child's heart all the way through. He could always put himself in the child's place. He was a big, good-natured, loving, lovable boy to the very end. He could make babyhood and childhood live again in his songs, because there lingered about his own heart the perfume of childhood's sweet simplicity. Though grown to be a man, he had escaped the withering blight of manhood's affections. He was sincerity itself, and out of a generous, sincere, ever-youthful heart, his simple melodies of home life bubbled forth with as much good cheer and with the same abounding enthusiasm as the hillside spring pours forth its gentle tides of cool, refreshing water.

These home melodies find an echoing chord of sympathy in every healthy human heart. The story has been recently told of an artist and a business man who met at lunch every day. Week after week they sat at the same little restaurant table, talking politics and the news of the day as they ate their midday meal. Then each went his way, the artist to his lonely studio and the business man to his desk in the counting room. A day came at length when the artist invited his friend to visit his studio. The place was filled with sketches made during long, busy years. On the walls valuable paintings were hung, some gorgeous in coloring, some imposing in size, but all representing skill and genius. But the artist's own treasure was not among these. It stood on the floor near a corner window with its face to the wall. With a look of intense longing the artist turned it round and eagerly scanned the face of his friend as he gazed

in silence upon the masterpiece. The picture was modest in size, but the soul of the artist had directed his brush. It was an old Negro cobbler who sat at his bench with hammer raised and peg in place. His eye rested on the open Bible that lay on the table beside him, while the wrinkled face of the old man seemed to be illumined with heavenly peace as he read the words of comfort, "Let not your heart be troubled."

A quick glance of appreciation flashed across the face of the business man. He, too, had learned lessons of peace from the Teacher divine. He, too, had found the source of true comfort in God's own word. The longing of the artist was satisfied. His work was understood. The canvas had conveyed his thought, and his heart was glad. After that, when the two men met at lunch as before, there was a new element in their friendship. Each had seen the inner heart of his friend, and the responsive sympathy expressed by that look into each other's hearts gave them a new liking for each other. So there is something so natural and true to human nature in these home melodies of Eugene Field that our hearts look into a brother's heart as we read them, and we are all children again.

Take the poem, entitled "Lizzie," in which the husband complains with a sort of whimsical fondness about his wife's anxiety concerning the baby which she has left at home:

> "Now Lizzie knows that gran'ma's there
> To see that everything is right;
> Yet Lizzie thinks that gran'ma's care
> Ain't good enuff f'r baby, quite.

Yet what am I to answer when
She kind uv fidgets at my side,
An' asks me every now an' then,
'I wonder ef the baby cried?'

"Seems like she seen two little eyes
A-pinin' f'r their mother's smile;
Seems like she hearn the pleadin' cries
Uv one she thinks uv all the while;
An' so she's sorry that she come,
An' though she allus tries to hide
The truth, she'd rather stay to hum
Than wonder ef the baby cried.

"Yes, wimmin folks is all alike—
By Lizzie you can jedge the rest;
There never wus a little tyke,
But that his mother loved him best.
And nex' to bein' what I be—
The husband of my gentle bride—
I'd wisht I wuz that croodlin' wee,
With Lizzie wonderin' ef I cried."

Who can resist the heavenly attraction that draws him away from manhood's burdens and troubles and surrounds him again with the fairyland of childhood, as through the poet's muse he listens to "Lollyby, lolly, lollyby?"—

"Last night whiles that curfew bell ben ringing,
I heard a moder to her dearie singing
'Lollyby, lolly, lollyby.'
And presently that chylde did cease his weeping,
And on hys moder's breast did fall a-sleeping,
To 'Lolly, lolly, lollyby.'

"Faire den the chylde unto his moder clinging,
But fairer yet the mother's gentle singing,—
'Lollyby, lolly, lollyby.'

And angels came and kisst that dearie smiling
In dreams while him hys moder ben beguiling
With 'Lolly, lolly, lollyby.'

"Then to my harte saies I, Oh, that my beating
Colde be assuaged by some swete voice repeating
'Lollyby, lolly, lollyby;'
That like this lyttel chylde, I, too, ben sleeping
With plaisaunt phantasies about me creeping,
To 'Lolly, lolly, lollyby.'

"Sometime, mayhap, when curfew bells are ringing,
A weary harte shall heare straunge voices singing,
'Lollyby, lolly, lollyby;'
Sometime, mayhap, with Chryst's love round me streaming,
I shall be lulled into eternal dreaming
With 'Lolly, lolly, lollyby.'"

Whose memory is so bankrupt in treasures that he has not some sweet echo to "Pittypat and Tippytoe?"—

"All day long they come and go—
Pittypat and Tippytoe;
Footprints up and down the hall,
Playthings scattered on the floor,
Fingermarks along the wall,
Tell-tale streaks upon the door—
By these presents you shall know
Pittypat and Tippytoe."

I am sorry for the man whose foot has never furnished the horse for that incarnation of mischief and childish joy, little "Teeny-Weeny:"

"Every evening, after tea,
Teeny-Weeny comes to me,
And, astride my willing knee,
Plies his lash and rides away;

Though that palfrey all too spare
Finds his burden hard to bear,
Teeny-Weeny doesn't care—
He commands, and I obey!

"First it's trot; and gallop then,—
Now it's back to trot again;
Teeny-Weeny likes it when
He is riding fierce and fast!
Then his dark eyes brighter grow
And his cheeks are all aglow,—
'More,' he cries, and never 'Whoa!'
Till the horse breaks down at last!"

A mouth must be old indeed that does not water with sweet memories of "The Sugar-Plum Tree," which—

"Blooms on the shore of the Lollipop Sea
In the garden of Shut-Eye Town."

How true to life is the portrait drawn of this audacious young "Usurper:"

"Aha! a traitor in the camp,
A rebel strangely bold,—
A lisping, laughing, toddling scamp,
Not more than four years old!

"To think that I, who've ruled alone
So proudly in the past,
Should be ejected from my throne
By my own son at last!

"He trots his treason to and fro,
As only babies can,
And says he'll be his mamma's beau
When he's a 'gweat, big man!'

"You stingy boy! you've always had
A share of mamma's heart.
Would you begrudge your poor old dad
The tiniest little part?

"That mamma, I regret to see,
Inclines to take your part,—
As if a dual monarchy
Should rule her gentle heart."

Happy the boy who does remain always his mother's beau, and retains his boyish tenderness and reverence for her until the end of life's journey. Some of the sweetest stories of history are those that tell of the knightly devotion of great men to the unknown but gentle-souled mother, whose tenderness made possible their greatness. When gruff old Dr. Johnson was fifty years old he wrote to his aged mother as if he were still her wayward but loving boy: "You have been the best mother, and I believe the best woman in the world. I thank you for all your indulgence to me, and beg forgiveness for all I have done ill and of all that I omitted to do well." John Quincy Adams had long been one of the most famous men in the world, and was far past middle life when his mother died, yet his cry even then was: "O, God, could she have been spared yet a little longer! . . . Without her the world seems to me like a solitude." A very tender love existed between the great poet, Robert Browning, and his mother. He used never to be tired of telling how when he was a child she would hold him on her knee and tell him Bible stories. And she excited his lifelong admiration by the tender care which she bestowed upon poor hurt ani-

mals that came under her notice. Browning's well-known tenderness for birds and animals was inherited from his gentle-hearted mother. So long as he continued under the parental roof, no matter how late he was out at night, he still went to her in her room to give to her his good-night kiss.

I do not know enough of the personal life of Eugene Field to say anything about his individual religious history, but I am sure that no one can read his more earnest songs without applying to him the description which Father Taylor, of the old Seamen's Bethel in Boston, once gave when characterizing his son-in-law, Judge Russell: "If he is not a saint, he is a very lovable sinner." How sweet and true is the picture of that home religion which has been the sheet anchor to many of us in later years as portrayed in his little poem entitled "In the Firelight:"

"The fire upon the hearth is low,
And there is stillness everywhere,
While, like winged spirits, here and there,
The firelight shadows fluttering go.
And as the shadows round me creep,
A childish treble breaks the gloom,
And softly from a farther room
Comes 'Now I lay me down to sleep.'

"And, somehow, with that little prayer
And that sweet treble in my ears,
My thoughts go back to distant years
And linger with a loved one there;
And as I hear my child's amen,
My mother's face comes back to me,—
Crouched at her side I seem to be,
And mother holds my hands again.

"O, for an hour in that dear place!
O, for the peace of that dear time!
O, for that childish trust sublime!
O, for a glimpse of mother's face!
Yet, as the shadows round me creep,
I do not seem to be alone,—
Sweet magic of that treble tone,
And 'Now I lay me down to sleep.'"

We enjoy these tender touches in Eugene Field's poetry all the more because there was nothing pharisaical or goody-goody about him. He always kept in touch with a real, human, mischievous, wholesome boyhood. And who of us have not felt our sides ache as we laughed over his sketch of the lad who says, "Jest 'fore Christmas, I'm as good as I kin be!" And there are a good many of us who have been our own masters for a long time—longer, maybe than we care to tell or meditate about—who remember somebody very closely akin to those boys whom he makes sing their confession for us:

"We used to sneak off swimmin' in those careless, boyish days,
And come back home of evenings with our necks and backs ablaze;
How mother used to wonder why our clothes were full of sand,—
But father, having been a boy, appeared to understand.

. . . . . .

"In after years poor father simmered down to five feet four,
But in our youth he seemed to us in height eight feet or more!
O, how we shivered when he quoth in cold, suggestive tone:
'I'll see you in the woodshed after supper all alone!'
O, how the legs and arms and dust and trouser-buttons flew,—
What florid vocalisms marked that vesper interview!"

And all the boys, young or old, can sympathize with those unfortunate youngsters who came under

the disapprobation of stern old Deacon Frisbie, who sprinkled "Ashes on the Slide." And all of us who have lived on to manhood have found the moral he draws from it very true to experience:

"Bill, Jim, and I, no longer boys, have learned through years of strife
That the troubles of the little boy pursue the man through life;
That here and there along the course wherein we hope to glide
Some envious hand has sprinkled ashes just to spoil our slide!

. . . . . .

"And, till a man has turned his face unto the wall and died,
He must expect to get his share of ashes on his slide."

No one sings a truer song of the illusions of life which are ever luring us onward to some success yet to be attained, but just now out of sight and beyond our reach, than does Field in "Over the Hills and Far Away:"

"Over the hills and far away,
A little boy steals from his morning play;
And under the blossoming apple tree
He lies, and he dreams of the things to be:
Of battles fought and of victories won,
Of wrongs o'erthrown and of great deeds done—
Of the valor that he shall prove some day,
Over the hills and far away—
Over the hills and far away!

"Over the hills and far away
It's, O, for the toil the livelong day!
But it mattereth not to the soul that's aflame
With a love for riches and power and fame!
On, O man! while the sun is high—
On to the certain joys that lie
Yonder where blazeth the noon of day,
Over the hills and far away—
Over the hills, and far away!

"Over the hills and far away,
An old man lingers at close of day;
Now that his journey is almost done,
His battles fought and his victories won—
The old-time honesty and truth,
The trustfulness and the friends of youth,
Home and mother—where are they?
Over the hills and far away—
Over the years, and far away!"

Field had a very remarkable poetic insight into the pathos of life. His "Little Boy Blue" and "Little Homer's Slate" are very tender and true chapters of human experience translated into song. But nothing can surpass the delicacy of the pathos which is breathed through the "Telling the Bees:"

"Out of the house where the slumberer lay
Grandfather came one summer day,
And under the pleasant orchard trees
He spake this wise to the murmuring bees:
'The clover bloom that kissed her feet,
And the posie bed where she used to play
Have honey store, but none so sweet
As ere our little one went away.
O, bees, sing soft, and, bees, sing low:
For she is gone who loved you so.'

"A wonder fell on the listening bees
Under those pleasant orchard trees,
And in their toil that summer day
Ever their murmuring seemed to say:
'Child, O child, the grass is cool,
And the posies are waking to hear the song
Of the bird that swings by the shaded pool,
Waiting for one that tarrieth long.'
'Twas so they called to the little one then,
As if to call her back again.

"O gentle bees, I have come to say
That grandfather fell asleep to-day,
And we know by the smile on grandfather's face
He has found his dear one's biding place.
So, bees, sing soft, and, bees, sing low,
As over the honey fields you sweep,—
To the trees a-bloom and the flowers a-blow
Sing of grandfather fast asleep;
And ever beneath these orchard trees
Find cheer and shelter, gentle bees."

Field was one of those happy men who inherited by birth or who acquired through discipline, a genius for keeping in tune with human life. There is nothing morbid or despairing in his song. His note was always full of cheer and hope. To be in tune with the world's life one must keep himself in tune. Our poet was in touch with the highest and noblest realities as truly as with the simplest and sweetest. There is a noble insight into the deep longings of the universal human soul in "The Wanderer:"

"Upon a mountain height, far from the sea,
I found a shell;
And to my listening ear the lonely thing
Ever a song of ocean seemed to sing,
Ever a tale of ocean seemed to tell.

"How came the shell upon that mountain height?
Ah, who can say?—
Whether there dropped by some too careless hand,
Or whether there cast when ocean swept the land,
Ere the Eternal had ordained the day.

"Strange, was it not? Far from its native deep,
One song it sang,—
Sang of the awful mysteries of the tide,
Sang of the misty sea, profound and wide,—
Ever with echoes of the ocean rang.

"And as the shell upon the mountain height
Sings of the sea,
So do I ever, leagues and leagues away,—
So do I ever, wandering where I may,—
Sing, O, my home! Sing, O, my home! of thee."

Now that our singer's harp is silent, he could not have a sweeter requiem than his own beautiful hymn, "The Singing in God's Acre:"

"Out yonder in the moonlight, wherein God's Acre lies,
Go angels walking to and fro, singing their lullabies.
Their radiant wings are folded, and their eyes are bended low,
As they sing among the beds whereon the flowers delight to grow,—

'Sleep, O, sleep!
The Shepherd guardeth his sheep,
Fast speedeth the night away,
Soon cometh the glorious day,
Sleep, weary ones, while ye may,—
Sleep, O, sleep!'

"The flowers within God's Acre see that fair and wondrous sight,
And hear the angels singing to the sleepers through the night:
And, lo! throughout the hours of day those gentle flowers prolong
The music of the angels in that tender slumber song,—

'Sleep, O, sleep!
The Shepherd loveth his sheep.
He that guardeth his flock the best
Hath folded them to his loving breast;
So sleep ye now, and take your rest,—
Sleep, O, sleep!'

"From angel and from flower the years have learned that soothing song,
And with its heavenly music speed the days and nights along;
So through all time, whose flight the Shepherd's vigils glorify,
God's Acre slumbereth in the grace of that sweet lullaby,—

'Sleep, O, sleep!
The Shepherd loveth his sheep.
Fast speedeth the night away,
Soon cometh the glorious day;
Sleep, weary ones, while ye may,—
Sleep, O, sleep!'"

X.

The Struggle for the Life of Others.

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."—Phil. ii. 4.

AN intelligent reviewer of Professor Drummond's book on "The Ascent of Man" has said that it is in fact only the same author's famous discourse on "The Greatest Thing in the World," written large for a different audience. There are many things in the book to bear out this statement. "The first chapter or two of the story of evolution," we are told in it, "may be headed 'The Struggle for Life;'" but take the book as a whole, and it is not a tale of battle. It is a love story. We have in these careful researches a wonderful mass of proof marshaled with great skill to establish the hypothesis that Christ's law of love runs down to the very roots of all life. "Take the tiniest protoplasmic cell," says Dr. Drummond, "immerse it in a suitable medium, and presently it will perform two great acts—the two which sum up life, which constitute the eternal distinction between the living and the dead—nutrition and reproduction. At one moment, in pursuance of the struggle for life, it will call in matter from without and assimilate it to itself; at another moment, in pursuance of the struggle for the life of others, it will set a portion of that matter apart, add to it, and finally give it away to form another life." Thus he shows

that, "even at its dawn, life is receiver and giver; even in protoplasm is self-ism and other-ism." And these two tendencies, it is declared, "are not grafts on the tree of life, they are its nature, its essential life. They are not painted on the canvas, but woven through it."

To substantiate these strong statements our author goes on to show that every plant in the world lives for others. It sets aside something, something costly, cared for, the highest expression of its nature. "The seed," he says, "is the tithe of love, the tithe which nature renders to man. When man lives upon seeds he lives upon love; literally, scientifically, love is life. If the struggle for life has made man, braced and disciplined him, it is the struggle for love that sustains him."

Still pursuing the same line of thought the professor very poetically assures us that nearly all the beauty of the world is love-beauty, whether it be the corolla of the flower, the plume of the grass, the lamp of the firefly, the plumage of the bird, or the face of a woman. That nearly all the music of the natural world is love-music—such as the song of the nightingale, the call of the mammal, the chorus of the insects, or the serenade of the lover. That nearly all the foods of the world are love-foods—like the date and the raisin, the banana and the bread fruits, the honey, the eggs, the grains, the seeds, and the cereals. And finally he asks us to remember that the family, "the crown of all higher life, is the creation of love; that cooperation, which means power, which means wealth, which means leisure, education, is the gift of love." Also that

"the diffusions of feelings which accompany them, the elevations, the ideals, the happiness, the goodness, and the faith in more goodness," all prove that this is a world of love in which we live.

All this is in most harmonious relation to the spirit of our text and the New Testament throughout. Humanity and all that relates to it is set to the key of brotherhood. All is chaos and discord on any other assumption; but the whole universe drops into place and becomes harmonious and musical when once we admit that it is all the creation of a divine Father whose heart is love. The discord and misery of the world have all come, without exception, from rebellion against this law of love. Wherever men have lived up to it there have been peace and prosperity and happiness. Where they have disobeyed it disaster and ruin have been the result. Ever and anon there rises up some arrogant and rebellious spirit who seeks to set humanity to some other key, such as greed or force, but it must always end in failure, for it is an attempt to turn back "the stream of tendency" which has Almighty God behind it. We are told that the river Arve, of Switzerland, when swollen by the floods, drive the waters of the Rhone back into the Lake of Geneva, and the force is sometimes so great as to make the mill-wheels revolve in a contrary direction. The selfish worldlings who are decrying the self-sacrificing attempts of earnest souls to advance the kingdom of Christ on earth, and bring in the reign of brotherhood, are trying to turn the mill-wheels of progress backward. They may succeed for a time, but in the long run the great currents of civilization,

like those of the Rhone, will sweep onward and the law of love will triumph. No matter what the local verdict may be, the final verdict is ever the verdict of righteousness and God.

Rabelais makes one of his characters who penetrated to the Elysian fields recognize some of the world's great men who were changed in a marvelous manner. Alexander the Great, for instance, was mending and patching old breeches and stockings, and thus obtained a very poor living. Achilles was a maker of hay bundles, and Hannibal, the great warrior, was a kettle-maker and a seller of eggshells. These queer fancies of the satirist are a very fair illustration of the change which has come, and is coming, over the public mind in the estimate which humanity puts upon these men and the law of force which they represent. The only life which can give joyous contemplation, either in one's own conscious remembrance or in the study of the history of another, is the life which has been given to brotherly struggle for others.

One of the keenest men intellectually who ever lived was Talleyrand, who was also one of the most selfish men in all history. Alone and unloved, near the close of his remarkable career, he wrote on his birthday these words: "Eighty-three years of life are now past; filled with what anxieties, what agitations, what enmities, what troublous complexities, and all this with no other result than a great weariness, physical and moral, and a profound sentiment of discouragement with regard to the future and of disgust for the past."

What a relief it is to turn from a picture like that

to the story of those who have literally followed the injunction of the text, and have sought to put themselves in their brothers' place, giving themselves to tender solicitude concerning the interests of the oppressed or neglected! Such a man was Vincent de Paul, of France, once a captive in Algiers. Obtaining freedom by happy escape, he devoted himself with divine success to works of benevolence—the establishment of hospitals, visiting those in prison, and promoting the spread of amity and peace. Unknown he repaired to the galleys at Marseilles, and, touched by the story of a poor convict, took the heavy chains upon himself that his fellow-man might leave to visit his wife and children. Then, moved by the sorrows of France, bleeding with war, he hurried to her powerful minister, Cardinal Richelieu, and on his knees entreated, "Give us peace! Have pity upon us! Give peace to France!"

The putting himself in his brothers' place and pausing to meditate upon the things of others was also the secret of the great work of John Howard, whose angelic presence illumined the gloom of the dungeon in many a land. "A person of more ability," he once said, in humble simplicity, "with my knowledge of the facts would have written better; but the object of my ambition was not the fame of an author. Hearing the cry of the miserable, I devoted my time to their relief." How many of us walk through streets of misery with our ears so dull and selfish that we hear no cry!

Clarkson, the great pioneer of the antislavery cause, tells the same story of the beginning of

his career of beneficence. Coming to know something about the sorrows of the slave trade he thought about it and grieved over it until, as he tells us, he came to the conclusion that "it was time some person should see these calamities to their end." Well does Charles Sumner exclaim, "Pure and noble impulse to a beautiful career!"

All travelers in Italy count it a privilege to stand in a crypt in Milan Cathedral before a marvelous tomb which is richly bespangled with gold and silver and precious stones. It is the tomb of a man who has been dead for more than three hundred years, but it is decorated and adorned like a wedding chamber. The body has been embalmed and lies in a coffin with glass lids, and the tomb itself is simply covered with jewels and precious stones. Once every year the people of Milan, and especially the children, march in procession (something as they do in Brooklyn on Anniversary Day) to this cathedral and round this crypt, singing a memorial song and a song of grateful gladness to the Lord. Why is all this display? This is the story: Three hundred years ago, when the black plague visited Milan, and priests and merchants and princes and lawyers and physicians alike fled to the hills, and many parents died and some others in their awful fright left even their children behind, this man, Carlo Borromeo, stayed at home, and, facing the black death, he gathered three hundred and seventy of the children together in the cathedral, and turned it into a home and school for them. He cared for them and taught them with all the tenderness of a patient mother. Those three hundred and seventy

boys and girls became the fathers and mothers of the next generation, and they told their children how good Cardinal Borromeo was to them and how he taught them the love of Jesus, and his memory has been handed down from generation to generation until to-day he is peculiarly "the patron saint" of the city of Milan.

It is the privilege of great souls, enlarged by the spirit of divine love, to live daily in this generous spirit of thoughtfulness for others. A recent writer has given us a most charming glimpse into this characteristic of James Russell Lowell, our great American poet. When this writer was a young man he drove one evening through the streets of Cambridge, Mass., searching for Mr. Lowell's residence. As he passed a corner of the Harvard College grounds he saw a gentleman walking with a little girl along the sidewalk, and stopped his buggy to make inquiry.

"Can you tell me," he asked, "where Professor Lowell lives?"

"I can show you his house," the gentleman answered, "but he is not at home now."

"I must wait," said the questioner. "If I miss him to-night I cannot see him for many months."

The gentleman who was walking spoke a few words to the child, and she left him and went on alone. Then he turned and beckoned to the occupant of the vehicle, who, after a conventional protest about giving trouble, was glad to accept the proffered assistance.

"I presume you are acquainted with Mr. Lowell," he remarked, "since you say he is not at home."

"I may consider myself acquainted with him," was the response. "My name is Lowell."

"A relative, no doubt," thought the young man. He was misled by the answer, and did not imagine that in this unexpected way he had encountered the very person he was seeking.

"I have never met him," he said aloud, "and I may be wrong in calling so unceremoniously. Perhaps you know him well enough to tell me if he would be willing to receive a contributor to the *Atlantic Monthly* who has had no time to ask for an interview."

"You misunderstood me," the supposed kinsman replied. "I am Professor Lowell. I shall be happy to see you as soon as we get to a light. Will you tell me who you are?"

The visitor was taken by surprise and was somewhat confused. To his apology Mr. Lowell replied: "I was going with my daughter to a friend's house, but she does not need me, nor does any one there. I think you do, if I may say it, now that I have heard your name. I had it on my mind to write to you, but this is much better."

One can imagine how welcome such treatment must have been to a young writer to whom Lowell stood as a sort of a supreme judge and beau-ideal of letters. The same spirit which made this act gracious and beautiful in the poet is open to the lawyer or the doctor, the blacksmith or the street-car conductor and—shall I say it?—the policeman; and it is as beautiful in them as it was in him.

In this text the great emphasis needs to be put on the first and the last words, "look" and "others."

A little thought on "the things of others" makes most people wondrous kind. A lady in waiting to the Princess of Wales told a friend a touching little incident which took place soon after the death of her son, the Duke of Clarence. The story is good enough to be true. The princess, with her usual gentle reticence, tried to hide the grief for her first-born. It was shown only in her failing health and in an increased tender consideration for all around her. One day while walking with one of her ladies in the quiet lanes near Sandringham, England, she met an old woman weeping bitterly and tottering under a load of packages. On inquiry it appeared that she was a carrier, and made her living by shopping and doing errands in the market town for the country people. "But the weight is too heavy at your age," said the princess. "Yes, you're right, ma'am; I'll have to give it up, and if I give it up I'll starve. Jack carried them for me—my boy, ma'am." "And where is he now?" "Jack? He's dead! O, he's dead!" the old woman cried wildly. The princess without a word hurried on, drawing her veil over her face to hide her tears. But a few days later a neat little cart and a stout donkey were brought to the old woman's door. She now travels with them to and fro, making a comfortable living, and has never been told the rank of the friend who has tried to make her life easier. That was done in a truly royal spirit. And the spirit, if not the charitable deed, is within the reach of all the sons and daughters of the King. Nobility is revealed in little things as truly as in great deeds. As the poet sings—

"The sturdy wind that fills the ship's white sail
And turns the mighty mill-wheel when it blows,
Once breathed the love-song of the nightingale
And wafted him the perfume of the rose.

"Let him who seeks a godlike man to find
Think of the wind, and seek its counterpart;
The tempest's strength matched by a noble mind,
The zephyr, by a pure and gentle heart."

If we live in this spirit we shall be able to command the confidence and love of those who need our aid and be able to help them. When I was pastor in Cincinnati some years ago I had in my church Dr. John Davis, "the beloved physician," as gentle and knightly a Christian soul as ever lived. He has since ceased to live on earth, but breathes his native air in heaven. He related to me one day this incident: A poor fellow in the city of Cincinnati had lost all respectability and was a common gutter drunkard. His family had disowned him and would not recognize him when they met him. Occasionally he would get a job at the stables where Dr. Davis kept his horses. One morning the doctor laid his hand on his shoulder and said: "Jim, I wish you would give up the drink."

The man's lips quivered as he answered: "If I thought you cared I would; but there is a great gulf between you and me."

"Have I made any gulf, Jim? Think a moment before you answer."

"No,—you—haven't."

"If you had been a millionaire could I have treated you more like a gentleman?"

"No, you couldn't."

"Then I do care, Jim."

"Doctor," was the response, "I'll never touch another drop of liquor as long as I live. Here's my hand on it."

Many years had passed away, more than ten, I am sure, when Dr. Davis told me this story, and "Jim" was then a respectable man. He was saved because this good doctor had lived in the Christ-spirit, year after year, in his presence; and when he told him that he cared whether he was a sinner and in sorrow or not he believed him, and God accounted his faith unto him for righteousness. Let us go and do likewise!

XI.

The Growth of the Christmas Spirit in the World.

"We have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."—Matt. ii, 2.

"And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them."—Luke ii, 9.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."—Luke ii, 14.

"The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."—Isa. xi, 9.

WHAT is the Christmas spirit, and is it growing among men to-day? Is the leaven of the Christ pervading the world's society, turning and overturning, looking forth toward the time when the whole shall be leavened? I cannot conceive of a grander subject for our Christmas meditation than this. It is one of the glories of our Christianity that it inspires us with this conception of limitless growth and development. No life can become monotonous that has ever looming above it glorious possibilities of still grander achievement. As Theodore Williams sings,

"Could I believe the world's full age to-day
Were nearly time's high noon, or think that man
Toiling so mightily since time began,
Now touches the ripe strength when power's decay,
Then would all seas where man's swift navies play,
And all wide shores his cities bless or ban,
Seem cramped, as to th' imperial Corsican
His island-dungeon, where he pined away.

"A youth, though captive, carries in his heart
Undaunted liberty no chains can tame;
He will not learn the low, unfruitful art
Of mean content, or weak, unmurmuring shame.
O, heart of man! keep young! keep brave! or be
A slave in chains, though lord of land and sea!"

I have gathered these Scripture passages together that we may study earnestly what is the Christmas spirit. And surely we cannot study the contrast between those wise scholars who came out of the East, with their wisdom and reverence—men who had given their lives to learn what they might about God's world and devoted their years to deep thought and holy meditation—and the shepherds on the slopes around Bethlehem—men who knew perhaps nothing about the world and the lore of the schools, who knew only what they learned caring for their lambs and protecting them from the wolves and bears that lurked among the hills—without catching this characteristic of the Christmas spirit, that humanity is one. About the manger-cradle of Jesus Christ the class spirit and the caste spirit were forever stamped with the disapprobation of heaven. Scholars and shepherds are brothers. The wise men of the East and the humble herders on the hills about Bethlehem are alike sons of God, who hear his voice, and to whom he speaks about the coming of the Saviour. One party sees the star in the east, and the other hears the songs of angels out of the sky, but to both the sky bends with its message and reveals the love of God, whose jeweled bosom it is.

Is that spirit growing in the world? There can

be only one truthful answer to this question. Notwithstanding all that is unjust and oppressive in our social life; notwithstanding that this is called the age of the trust and the soulless corporation; notwithstanding the inequalities of fortune, cruel and unholy, that make it possible for one man to gather in one lifetime (and keep out of the penitentiary while he is doing it) a hundred million dollars of gold, while, in order that he may play with railroads and steamships, many thousands of men have not enough to eat or wear—notwithstanding all this, it is yet true that there never was a time in the history of this world when the Christmas spirit was so widely dominant among men and when humanity itself counted for so much as now. Think how slavery is dying out in the whole earth! Think how school and college and equality of employment are opening to women everywhere! Consider how for a penny the newspaper carries intelligence in science and art and music and poetry and religion into the lowliest homes everywhere. Consider how sensitive the world is, if once you catch its ear, to the wronging of the most helpless child! True, ten thousand children go on being wronged and oppressed and die neglected. But on no day since Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem has it been so easy to arouse the great forces of society and combine them together to protect the helpless, to overthrow the wicked, to uplift the weak and defend the good, as it is this day.

In this contrast between the wise men and the shepherds, and in the fact that God spoke to both, recognizing them all as his children, there is a

thought that we ought to bring out and meditate upon for a moment: God has many ways of speaking to his children; but there is no tribe of men and no individual soul that has not spiritual capacity (that is, the capacity to be taught of God), and he does not leave any soul entirely untaught. It is said of our Christ that he is the Light of the World, and again that "He lighteneth every man that cometh into the world."

We had a great deal of discussion afterward as to the wisdom of the Parliament of Religions, held at Chicago during the World's Fair. Many wise men, and some that are not so wise, think it was a great blunder that a Christian nation, and the representatives of the Christian religion, should invite from all the ends of the earth the ambassadors of other religious faiths to meet in common parliament, each bringing forth what light he had, declaring the hope that was in him, and showing as best he could what his religion was able to do for mankind. Such people say that it degraded our Christianity and put our Christ on a par with Buddha, or Mohammed, or Confucius. Now, with all due deference to these good people, I wish to say that I have no sympathy whatever with that sentiment. I have no doubt it is all logical from their standpoint, but their standpoint, it seems to me, is all wrong. These people on the other side of the world are also God's children. He loves them as he loves us. One must have a very narrow conception of God who imagines that in those lands where three fourths of the human race dwell God has left himself altogether without a witness through all

these centuries. It would be a hopeless thing indeed to think of carrying the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ into Asia and Africa if the men and women who dwelt there had nothing akin to it, nothing with which it could fellowship, no soil in which it might grow. Whatever is true in Buddhism, or Mohammedanism, or any other faith, which has grown up in answer to the longings, the aspirations, the sorrows, the hopes and fears that well up from the great deeps of the human heart, is as divinely true, and as certainly the truth of God, as if it were in Christianity itself. We must never lose sight of the fact that all truth is akin everywhere. Truth is as true, and just as unmistakably a spark from the heart of God, when found in the soul of some idolatrous Chinaman in the heart of that great heathen land, as when believed in and loved by the ripest Christian scholar in America. So it seems to me that the Parliament of Religions was one of the grandest evidences we have had in our century of the growth of that Christmas spirit which teaches that there is one God and Father of us all, that all men are his children, and that he is not silent toward any of them.

What I have said does not for a moment affect my faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ, or in the duty and privilege of preaching him to every creature. Those who think that we degraded Christianity by humbly sitting down beside our brothers who have not the light as we have it must have forgotten that scene when Christ girded himself with a towel and went about among the disciples washing their feet, exhorting them that whoever would be

chief must be servant of all, and calling on them to consider that the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister. Some people talk about protecting our Christianity as though we were afraid of a competition with other faiths, or as though we were set to guard some sacred relics which somebody might steal away from us. Such a conception of Christianity is itself a relic of heathenism. The only protection Christianity wants is the protection that a seed requires. Bury it in the earth, that it may grow. Cast it abroad into the soil, that it may have shower and sunshine. Hide it in your heart like the leaven in the measure of meal, that it may pervade your being and master your very self. And what it is able to do for you, it is able to do for humanity.

Another characteristic of the Christmas spirit is peace. Is that growing in the world? Perhaps you say it is a strange time to ask that question, when great nations of the East are engaged in deadly conflict; when Japan, about whose civilization so much has been said, has suddenly relapsed into barbarism, and the civilized world was horror-stricken at Mr. Creelman's vivid account of the massacre at Port Arthur. Still I am ready to maintain everywhere that the Christmas spirit of peace and good will toward men is more widely scattered abroad in the world to-day than ever before. The men who did these barbarities among the Japanese soldiers were not Christians. There are many thousands of sincere native Christians in Japan whose hearts were as deeply pained as were our own by these horrors. The sud-

den relapse of the Japanese soldiery into barbarism was not at all astonishing. The ruling class in Japan have not to any great extent accepted Christianity. They have accepted Christian inventions and arts and sciences; but they have not yet taken into their hearts the Christ. They have begun to cultivate their intellects with the thought of the Western world; but they have not yet had deeply planted within their soul the graces of the Spirit. They are washed outside, but not inside. Many of them are whited sepulchers; outside they present the aspect of Christian civilization, but inside they are full of dead men's bones, and the old hates and lusts and vices of heathenism still hold revel there. There never could be a more remarkable illustration of the truth of Christianity's great claim that the salvation of a man or a nation is by way of the heart rather than by way of the head than the sudden collapse of Japanese civilization at Port Arthur. Japan, like every other nation, must learn Christian civilization by way of the altar of penitence. But in the alacrity of the Japanese government to confess this monstrous crime and disown it, and its declaration that all officers responsible shall be punished, there was a marvelous illustration of the power of Christmas sentiment in the world. When Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem there was not a nation on earth that would have apologized for murdering defenseless enemies. So in this action is found a monumental, world-wide evidence of the growth of the Christmas spirit among mankind, a mark of the rising of that tide which is finally to cover the earth. Longfellow sings:

"I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men!

"But in despair I bowed my head.
'There is no peace on earth,' I said,
'For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men!'

"Then pealed the bells more loud and deep,
'God is not dead, nor doth he sleep!
The wrong shall fail,
The right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men!'"

Slowly it seems to us sometimes—but if we could look down upon the earth as God looks upon it, it would seem rapidly—the Christmas spirit is filling the world. Away back yonder Isaiah looked down the line of history and saw the first Christmas morn, and on and on through our day and beyond it to the golden triumph. Standing on his lofty hilltop of observation his heart glowed within him as he exclaimed, "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for

the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the basilisk's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."

XII.

Life's Old Question, What Must I Do to Be Saved?

"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"—Acts xvi, 30.
"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."—Eph. ii, 8.

THE man who asked this question of Paul and Silas was desperately in earnest. He was the jailer of the Philippian prison, which had just been shaken by an earthquake. Rushing out, he saw that his prisoners were released from their dungeons and their chains, and, feeling that he was ruined, he drew his sword to put an end to his own life, when Paul shouted out to him, "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here." Then, with a sudden revulsion of feeling, the man was smitten with a consciousness of his own sinfulness. Several things had conspired to bring about this result: In the first place, Paul and Silas had been preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the resurrection in the town, and it was no doubt well noised abroad; and the jailer, who was not a dull, heavy man, but, as the story shows, was of a sensitive, alert temperament, had no doubt been well informed concerning their message. Then, after being beaten and maltreated, these preachers were brought to the jail and delivered over to his care. He had never seen prisoners act as they did. Though their condition was most pitiable they were cheerful and full of hope and courage. Instead of

growling and complaining and vowing vengeance on their enemies, they sang songs of praise to God. All this had had its effect upon this stern, practical man of affairs, and when now they interposed to save his life by voluntarily remaining in the jail he was smitten to the heart with the conviction, not only that he was a sinner against the God whom they worshiped, but that these prisoners had some knowledge of God which gave them a victory over pain and sorrow and buoyed them up with a peace to which he was a stranger. And so he gave utterance to the cry of a hungry soul, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

That is the most oft-repeated question in human history. It is a question that will not down. Like the little red spot in the palm of Lady Macbeth's white hand, no earthly washing or soap of worldly philosophy has been able to cleanse or remove the sin of the human heart. A man may laugh at the question and treat it with ribald jest or infidel scoff, as does Ingersoll, who yet with a shrewd cunning chooses the topic in order to reach the ear of the public, knowing there is no other question so close to the center of the heart of every man and woman in the world. "What must I do to be saved?" Saved from the sins of the past. Saved from memories that are sometimes lulled to sleep, but in unexpected moments come back with noisy impudence and threatening persistence and drive away all joy from the richest feast. Saved from the consciousness of guilt—not only deeds of guilt, but its defilement; from evil thoughts, from impure imaginations, from unholy and evil pictures of possible

wrongdoing. Saved from an inner longing for those things that belong to the low and that lead the soul downward toward the pit. Saved from an unclean and sinful inner self! Ah, there are hours when the most hardened men and women in the world put themselves in the witness box, and there in the court of their own conscience, as merciless as any old mediæval tribunal of the Inquisition days, they cross-examine themselves with pitiless severity, and the poor, shriveled, wicked, despairing self cries out its one cry to God, "What must I do to be saved?" —to be saved from the condemnation of a violated law; to have canceled the judgment which conscience holds against the sinner in the court of heaven; to escape that penalty, just but terrible, "the wages of sin," which is death.

I am sure I am not speaking anything strange and mysterious and unknown to you. I am speaking to you chapters out of your own experience. I am recalling to you hours in your own history. God grant that this may be an hour when the mask shall be torn from your hearts, when sinful indifference shall be dissipated, when your conscience shall be aroused, and when those who have not yet found to this question an answer which has brought a consciousness of divine pardon and peace shall ask, with a deep and intense earnestness, "What must I do to be saved?"

The question is asked of Paul, and Paul shall answer it; but, in order that the conditions of salvation may be a little more precisely set forth, we will take the answer given in his letter to the Ephesians, which, while agreeing exactly in substance with the

answer given in Acts, has more of elaboration and illustration, as would be likely to be the case where a man has time to write at leisure. Paul's answer to this momentous question is: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." Salvation is God's gift, but it is not unconditional. The possibility of salvation is unconditional. God's love is universal to all men, but there is not a single instance in the whole story of redemption where it is not set forth that salvation through God's love is conditioned on the will and action of the individual. It is a universal salvation to every human soul who will comply with its conditions. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The hope for the world's salvation began in the heart of God, and the wondrous birth and life and death of Jesus Christ was a revelation of the grace of God. Jesus Christ was the incarnate love of God for lost men and women. In him the heart of God was made flesh so that we might behold him and understand the grace of God when we saw it illustrated in a man like ourselves. Strange it is that anybody who knows the story of Jesus Christ can harden his heart against God.

Once in Philadelphia a terrible accident occurred, caused by the sudden collapse of a large business building which was nearing completion. The excitement spread through the city, and in a few moments a great crowd gathered. After a little, as rescuers began to undertake to save some of the

workmen who were buried under the ruins, the crowd was startled by a sharp cry, "For the love of God, help me!" All eyes followed the sound, and, looking up, they saw a man apparently uninjured, but in great danger. So long as he remained quiet he was safe; but no one could move the beam that wedged him in without endangering his own life. The faces of the brave rescuers paled as they took in the situation at a glance, and they hesitated a moment.

In the crowd were two people who were greatly interested in the man who was in such a perilous situation—a fair little girl about twelve years of age and a strong Scotchman who had just hurried to the scene of disaster and was now pushing his way to the front. As he heard the cry Donald MacPherson's heart almost ceased to beat, for it came from none other lips than those of his comrade, Robert Sheffield. He looked around for some one to help him rescue Bob, and as he turned his eyes fell upon Lily, Bob's only child, this same fair girl of twelve. Her childish face was white and pinched with the anguish in her heart, and her strained eyes were fixed on her father. Donald waited no longer, but with a bound he cleared the rope the police had drawn about the spot and ran swiftly to the rescue.

It was all so quickly done that the spectators did not realize what he was about until he had reached the place where Robert was imprisoned. He stood a moment and told Bob calmly just how to move when the beam was lifted, and how to make his safe escape from the building. Moments were precious;

a mighty hush fell upon all; so still was it that the creaking of the wood could be heard distinctly as Donald slowly and steadily began to lift one end of the beam. For a moment it seemed as though Bob would not be able to free himself because of his cramped position; but strength came, and amid the wild cheers of the crowd Bob crept safely out and down and was safe again on the ground.

Not until now did they think of the fate of Donald. He himself knew all when he started to rescue his dearest friend. He stood holding the beam until he saw Bob safe on the ground, and then, with a smile that transfigured his honest face, he let the beam fall back into place. Another crash, and Donald MacPherson was hidden from their sight by the pile of debris that had fallen upon him. The rescuers, who had seemed paralyzed until now, sprang into the building and worked like giants, spurred on by the hope that perhaps he was not yet dead and that they might be able to save him.

Tenderly they carried out the sadly bruised and broken body of Donald MacPherson. An ambulance drove off with him to the hospital. All was done for him that was within human power; but the surgeons looked into each other's eyes across the mangled body and murmured, softly, "Poor fellow!"

In the last hour he said to his pastor: "Bury me from the church I love so well; and, pastor, I want all the boys to come. To-day is Good Friday, you know, and I want you to tell the boys, not about me, but tell them of the other Brother, the Son of God, who died on Calvary so many years ago.

Don't let them look at these cuts on my head; show them the thorn prints on his brow. These hands are mangled, but hold up to them the hands torn by cruel nails. I died for Bob because I love him and those for whom he lived. But tell them of the love that gave itself a ransom for sinners, aliens from their Father's home. I never was much of a talker myself, pastor, but you will know how to tell them the story that I have tried to live before them." His voice was growing very weak now; he was almost gone; but with a last effort he said, "And tell Bob that as he made a place in his home for me so there is a home for him, 'not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' O—tell — Bob—to come—home." And he who had given his life for his friend was at rest.

At the funeral the pastor said to that great company of comrades: "I will tell the story as Donald wished, but it is Donald who speaks through my lips to you." He turned their thoughts to Calvary with this Scripture: "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." And he closed his sermon with these words: "Donald's last words were, 'Tell Bob to come home!' but the invitation is for whosoever will, come home!" He paused, and from the gallery some one in the choir sang a message so sweet and tender that an angel seemed to echo Donald's words:

"I gave My life for thee,
My precious blood I shed,
That thou mightst ransomed be
And quickened from the dead.
I gave, I gave my life for thee,
What hast thou given for me?

"I suffered much for thee,
More than my tongue can tell,
Of bitterest agony,
To rescue thee from hell;
I've borne, I've borne it all for thee,
What hast thou borne for me?

"And I have brought to thee,
Down from my home above,
Salvation full and free,
My pardon and my love;
I bring, I bring rich gifts to thee,
What hast thou done for me?"

Do you wonder that Robert Sheffield came home to the mercy seat and to Christ whom his friend had so illustrated? You would think it very strange if he had not; but how strange it is that you who have had so much of the mercy and love of God should continue to refuse the invitations of his grace!

While salvation is of God's grace it is received through your living, active faith. It is not a faith in any particular system of doctrine that is requisite to salvation, but a faith which means practical trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour from sin and from the penalty of broken law. A good man who has come to a position of influence and is blessing the world wrote not long since this story of the simple way in which he made the decision and exer-

cised the practical faith that changed the current of his life: When he was seventeen years old he lived in the backwoods of Missouri. A Methodist minister lost his way and stopped at his father's house to ask for a drink of water and to inquire the road. The boy gave him a drink out of a gourd, and his parents asked the man to come back and preach for them. He did so, holding a service in their new log house about once a month. He stood by the great fireplace while the people sat on boards laid on boxes or on the edges of the beds which were in the end of the room, for there was but one room in the house. The preaching of this earnest man so aroused this young boy that one Sunday he rode to the county seat, ten miles away, to attend church. As he returned, cantering along through the woods on his little mouse-colored mule, where the rough roads and steep hills would permit, he was overtaken by a young man on horseback. They rode together some distance and finally drew near a house where the newcomer said he intended to stop. A good many horses were tied to the fence, and the young fellow inquired what was going on. The reply was that there was to be a party there that night, and he was invited to stop. He knew that meant cards and dancing, with more or less drinking, according to the customs of the community, and excused himself on the plea that he must go home and attend to his chores, as it was nearly dark. He was urged to stay, but declined and rode on. When he had passed the house a little distance, and was hidden from it by a turn in the road about a clump of bushes, he drew rein and stopped. "There," thought

he, looking at the house through the bushes, "there are the young people of my community. Not one of them belongs to the Church. If I come out as a Christian I must turn my back on all my friends. I must hold myself aloof from them at least." He thought it all over—fun, frolic, friends on the one side; right and heaven on the other. At last he straightened himself up in his stirrups and, lifting his hand to heaven, said, "If I must go alone to the judgment, so be it. I'll stand by my convictions of right." Within a year from that time he was in school at Evanston, Ill., and his life brightened and broadened and was ennobled in ways he had never dreamed of.

There are those listening to the preaching of the word who need now to make the great decision of life. God has done all that he can for your salvation. It is for you to accept it and act upon it. Some of you have been convinced of this for a long time, and almost persuaded to consecrate yourselves completely to the Christian life; but you are lured by the world on one side and by heaven on the other, and you are losing all the blessed possibilities of God's good gifts through this lack of decision.

Mark Guy Pearse relates an interesting story of a singular sight which he witnessed off Cape Horn. For some miles there was a narrow strip of water where the great waves, whitecapped with broken spray, dashed high over the ship. On either side the sea was comparatively calm, while this boiled with fury, rolling and surging. Yet there was no rock about which the sea surged, nor was there any such fierce wind as to account for it. Overhead the

air was thick with sea fowls. Thousands of birds dived into this troubled water. The smaller fish were flung up by the toss, and thus fell a prey to the birds. When Mr. Pearse asked a reason for this strange sight he found it was the point at which the tide met the strong current of the sea, and here they raged together. Within, the tide only ran, and it was calm. Without, the current prevailed, and there, too, was calm. On this troublesome bit they met, and neither prevailed. That is a picture of those who have not yielded their hearts to the heavenly current. They are torn by distracted emotions and impulses and satisfied by neither. Isaiah describes it when he says, "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

It is infinitely sad to see young men and young women frittering away the best part of their lives in this unsatisfactory condition of mind. I would I knew how to plead with you to give to Christ the best and noblest of your powers!

"Give Christ the best! O young man, strong and eager,
And conscious of your own abounding life,
Ready to throw your soul's fresh, glowing powers
Into some noble cause, or lower strife.
Christ Jesus was a young man, strong and brave,
Give him your heart's allegiance, give to him
The best you have.

"And you in whom the same young life is throbbing,
But with a steadier pulse and gentler flow,
Whose hearts were made for sacrifice and loving,
Whose soul's ideals grow with you as you grow,

O give to Christ your first, most sacred love,
And of your heart's devotion give to him
The best you have.

"And is our best too much? O friends, let us remember
How once our Lord poured out his soul for us,
And in the prime of his mysterious manhood
Gave up his precious life upon the cross.
The Lord of lords, by whom the worlds were made,
Through bitter grief and tears gave us
The best he had."

XIII.

Off with the Old Man and On with the New.

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."—Eph. iv, 22–24.

THIS is a very instructive and striking figure. The putting off the old life of impure thought and habit and putting on the new life of righteousness is compared to the vagabond or tramp who should put off his rags, wash away his filth, and reappear clothed in new raiment. The figure is one which has taken strong hold upon the thought of humanity. Habits are like clothes, and they form the first evidence by which we judge those whom we meet. Dr. Dowling relates an amusing incident which occurred at the Union Depot in Boston when the International Christian Endeavor Convention held in that city. At each depot there were committees of information who could be recognized by their white hats. One young man, in no way connected with the society, stood waiting for a street car. He was indiscreet enough to wear a white yachting cap, and by the newly-arrived Endeavorers was naturally mistaken for one of the committee. Questions to the right of him, questions to the left of him, questions in front of him, volleyed and thundered. Like a Balaklava hero he bore it all for a time, explaining politely to each one his or her

mistake. At last, however, patience was completely spent, so he went across the street and stood in the door of a liquor saloon, that everyone might know that he was not a member of the Society of Christian Endeavor; and, sure enough, after that no one made the mistake.

The figure used in this text sets forth very clearly the power of each individual in the acceptance or rejection of Christ. There is a good deal said sometimes about the helplessness of a man to become a Christian in his own strength; but while that is true it is also true that the positive power is in us to receive divine help. The decisive factor is in our own will—"whosoever will may come." That which gives dignity to humanity more than anything else is this momentous power to *will*. As another recently said, "I will,"—those words lift man above the universe beside. The humblest visitor to the Columbian Exhibition might walk proudly into its great art gallery and, standing before the matchless productions of the artists, raise his fist in challenge, "I am more than thou, for I can say, I will." What are the perfections of form, the beauty of color, to the majesty of a free, determinant will? A thoughtful man stands and looks at the giant locomotive capable of hauling a train of one hundred and eighty tons in weight over the New York Central Railroad at the fearful rate of more than sixty-three miles an hour, and says, "Despite your Titanic force you are nothing; I will." He pauses before the magnificence of Niagara and says, "What are you, O flood of water? I will." It is the will of man, that which binds him to God

and proves him to have been made in the divine image and likeness, to which the Bible makes its sublime appeal. And I address you this evening knowing that each one of you, through the grace of God, has the power to will and through his help to bring it to pass, to cast off from you every vestige of impurity in purpose and motive, and to clothe yourselves, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, in the new raiment of righteousness.

Let us not fail to notice the utter vileness of sin as declared in the text. The Bible offers no compromise anywhere with sin. It is to be cast off, washed away, destroyed. Modern research and culture have not discovered anything to palliate sin or to take the poison out of its venomous sting. Tennyson, the poet, once criticised Bulwer Lytton by saying of him that he always had "a spotless shirt, a dapper boot, and a soul of dirt." Sinful passions and appetite may clothe themselves in new forms, and may sometimes appear as angels of light, but behind the fascinating exterior there is always "a soul of dirt." Men sometimes talk about the Bible warning of the punishment of sin as though it were some arbitrary edict of God. But the fact is that sin is always a poisonous, unresting, disturbing factor, carrying with itself its own assurance of punishment. Its fate is voiced by Isaiah when he says, "The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

Bishop Whipple relates that after a service in a place where the people had been a good deal bewildered by a preacher who accepted only as much

of the Bible as suited his whims, and who was wont to make merry over the idea of future punishment, a man stepped up to him and said, in a contemptuous voice, "Bishop, do you believe in a hell?"

The bishop replied, "Are you anxious to know what I think of hell?"

"Yes," said he.

"Well," said Bishop Whipple, "the best answer I have ever heard came from a poor Negro woman. She had a young niece who sorely tried the poor soul. The more she struggled to keep this willful charge in the right way the more she seemed to wander. One day, after hearing a new preacher, the niece came bounding into the room and said: 'Aunty, I ain't gwine to believe in hell no more. Ef dar is any hell I jest want to know where dey gets all dere brimstone for dat place; dat's 'zactly what I would like to know.'

"The old woman fixed her eyes on her, and, with a tear on her cheek, said: 'Ah, honey darlin', you look out you don't go dere, for you'll find dey all takes der brimstone wid 'em.'"

The bishop then said, "Is there any other question in theology you would like to ask?"

"No," said he.

And he went home, let us hope, with a new glimpse of the Bible idea, which is illustrated on every street of the earth, that sin brings sorrow, and that to be saved we must be delivered from sin. The sad sight of men and women carrying "their own brimstone" even in this world meets our eyes on every side.

The bright morning star which has risen on our

earth is the assurance that a man may forsake his sins, that he may cast away the vile garments of deceitful lusts, and that by the grace of God he may be renewed in the very spirit of his mind, so that the old vile thoughts and impure imaginations in which he once wallowed as a hog wallows in the mire shall be cast out, and the habits which like a beggar's filthy rags once clothed him, making him an object of shame and disgust, may be put off, and his cleansed and renewed soul may be reclothed in garments that befit the purity and wholesomeness of its nature. And I thank God that there is no proposition in mathematics or philosophy more clearly susceptible of proof than that, and none concerning which conclusive testimony is so abundant in the daily experience of men and women.

Mr. S. H. Hadley, the sweet-spirited and saintly superintendent of the McAuley Mission, relates this remarkable case of conversion: A man came into his meeting one afternoon with one thousand forged railway tickets in his pockets, and he had the plate with him with which he did the work. He was on his way to the ferry, intending to meet an accomplice over in Brooklyn, but he was attracted in some way at the door of the Mission, and went in. As he sat there listening to the testimony of ignorant but redeemed men the Spirit of God took hold of his soul. He went out, but he didn't go over to Brooklyn. He came again in the evening, and the Lord troubled him mightily. He went out and got on to the ferry-boat, and when the boat reached the middle of the river he dumped the railway tickets, plate, and everything overboard into the water.

Then he went back to the meeting and knelt down for prayers. Jesus met him there and forgave his sins, and gave him the witness of the Spirit that he was born again. He got up and made a confession right there before them all. He was a Swede, a fine-looking man; he had never drank in his life.

But the next question was how he should get a living. So he knelt down and asked the Lord, in the simplicity of his new faith, to help him find a job. He got a job digging holes for the railroad piers. They had to be dug ten or eleven feet deep, and it was hard, dirty work; his hands got dreadfully blistered. He took his wife to the top floor of a tenement house; they had never lived in such a place before; but they praised the Lord because he was saved, and every dollar and a half a day that he earned was clean money.

Finally, one of his former acquaintances heard where he was, and found him at his work, digging in the dirt with his blistered hands, and said to him, "Why, John, are you crazy?"

"No," said John, "I never was so sane in my life."

"Well, what's the matter?"

"I have found Jesus," said John, "and given my heart to God."

"But, John, look here! We never had such a good thing on our hands as we have now. There are ten thousand dollars in it, if you will come and join us."

"No, sir; no more of that for me."

"Well, John, you're in hard luck; let me help you," and he pulled out a roll of money and offered it to John.

"No, sir," said John; "I won't take it."

"Well, come along for a talk with me at my hotel."

John went with him to the Fifth Avenue Hotel, but he refused to go into any counterfeiting scheme. After he got home he put his hand into his pocket and found there three hundred dollars in bills which the man had put into his pocket without his knowledge.

He thought about it for a moment. The tempter said, "O, come, now; keep it; he gave it to you. Just think how many holes that will fill up!" But the struggle was short. He just said, "Lord Jesus, if you ever stood by me, stand by me now." And he went back to the hotel and gave back the money.

The man was greatly surprised, and said, with tears in his eyes, "John, if I could have what you have got I would give up everything I have in the world."

And well he could afford to, for this man has helped to save hundreds of others. He has maintained his integrity, and is trusted by some of the wealthiest and most respected business men in New York city.

So marvelous are the victories of Jesus Christ in helping men to put off the old life of sin and keep on the new life of righteousness, that you could not tell me anything good enough to be true about his power to save that would be too wonderful for me to believe.

One day a Western Indian came to a missionary and said: "I know this religion is true. The men

who have walked in this trail are better and happier. But I have always been a warrior, and my hands are full of blood. Could I be a Christian?"

The missionary repeated the story of God's love. To test the man he said, "May I cut your hair?"

The Indian wears his scalp lock for his enemy. When it is cut it is a sign that he will never go on the warpath again. The man said, "Yes, you may cut it. I shall throw my old life away."

It was cut. He started for home, and met some wild Indians, who shouted with laughter, and with taunts said, "Yesterday you were a warrior; to-day you are a squaw."

It stung the man to madness, and he rushed to his home and threw himself on the floor and burst into tears. His wife was a Christian, and came and put her arms about his neck and said, "Yesterday there was not a man in the world who dared call you a coward. Can't you be as brave for him who died for you as you were to kill the Sioux?"

He sprung to his feet and said, "I can and will!"

It is the glory of our human nature and the badge of our divine sonship that love can make a stronger appeal to us than hate, and that a man can be braver for love than for selfishness.

Let me speak an earnest word to any who are neglecting to enter upon this new life of purity and faith. Nothing could be more ungrateful than your delay to recognize the great sacrifice of Christ for you. Nothing could be more unwise than to allow the forces of selfishness and evil to fortify and intrench themselves in your heart and in your habits. The promises of Christ hold out

the most splendid prospect for peace and nobility of life in this world, and lead to a glorious immortality. And yet you are not accepting the promises for your own, and instead of entering on this new life of your soul you are drifting every day farther from it.

A writer from the seaside relates that one afternoon at a popular summer resort he saw a number of people running down to the lake beach, and at the same time a boat putting off in hot haste. The boat had gone out to rescue a young man who, in bathing, had gone beyond his depth, and, being unable to swim, had sunk. After remaining for some time under water he was taken out, apparently dead; but restoratives were promptly applied to rekindle, if possible, the spark of life. Many waited at the door of the building into which they had carried him to ascertain whether he was likely to recover. Several came out, but to tell of no hope. At last a person dashed out of the house who was the bearer of better tidings—"He has drawn a breath! He has drawn a breath!" Immediately the crowd caught and echoed the cry, "He has drawn a breath! He has drawn a breath!" The apparently drowned man had drawn a breath! A breath! Only a breath, that is all. But think how much that meant! That breath, though so feeble in itself, meant all the difference between life and death. Everybody's thought jumped inevitably to the logic of the fact, and their glad hearts cried, as they looked joyously into each other's faces, "He has drawn a breath! He has drawn a breath! He lives! He lives!"

So it may seem a small thing to some when a man stands out humbly before the world and says, "I have been a sinner, but through the grace of Jesus Christ, who died to redeem me, I am going to put off the old man with his deeds and put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Ah, he may not be able to say even that much, but only strong enough, like the poor publican, to smite his breast with his hand and exclaim, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" That may seem a small thing to some people. But all heaven is happy at a sight like that. And through the streets of the new Jerusalem they cry with joyous shouts, "He has drawn a breath! He has drawn a breath! He lives! He lives!" "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

XIV.

An Inventory of Spiritual Riches.

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."—2 Cor. viii, 9.

THERE used to be in one of the old school histories a simple woodcut representing an oak tree, in whose shade stands an army officer in full uniform, his hand extended, and something in the hand; in front stands a private soldier on whose countenance the feelings of shame and admiration seem strangely mingled. This was the story of the picture: Andrew Jackson had led his troops into northern Alabama against the Indians. In the midst of the campaign the food supplies failed and the men began to suffer severely from hunger. There soon grew up a very mutinous feeling among the soldiers. The general showed them how unavoidable their suffering was, and appealed to their manhood and their patriotism to meet it with unflinching courage. The men listened, but were not satisfied. Finally, an angry meeting was held and a messenger was sent to Jackson with an *ultimatum.* When he drew near the oak tree, under which the general sat, he saw that he was eating. Rushing forward in indignation he cried, "The officers eat while the men starve!" "Yes," said the hero of New Orleans, "and divide with the men what they eat!" stretch-

ing forth his hand, in which lay a few acorns, with which he had been seeking to satisfy his hunger. Rifle balls could not have killed the mutiny as did those few acorns. The messenger rushed back to his comrades crying, in shame, "Boys, he is starving with us, and a man is a dastard now who will not follow him to the death."

Striking as is that picture in its illustration of sacrifice and self-denial, it is feeble indeed compared with the picture suggested to us in this Scripture passage, which portrays the Christ surrounded with all the glory of heaven, its wealth of love, its music of angels and fellowship with the Highest, stripping himself of all and coming down to earth to be born in a manger, to grow up in an abode of toil, to live afterward a life of loneliness, so that he could say, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." He did this, not as an adventure, as some nobleman or millionaire might for his own sport go into the jungles of Africa tiger hunting, but he did it because his heart yearned after those who were lost in sin, those who were hopelessly bankrupt and wretched; those whom there was no eye to pity and no arm to save; he laid aside all the riches of heaven, and for our sakes became poor that our poverty might be turned into wealth. If such amazing love and sacrifice will not pierce our hearts and bring us to repentance, then surely there is no arrow in the quiver of heaven that can do so.

It is not my purpose, however, to dwell this morning upon the infinite cost by which our riches

are obtained, but to make an inventory with you of the riches of the soul which were purchased for us by the voluntary poverty of Jesus Christ. In the very nature of the case this inventory must be very far from perfect, for the riches of Christ are unsearchable and past finding out; but I am sure it cannot fail to do us good to study for a little concerning the splendid wealth which a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err in finding for himself as a result of the atoning love of Jesus Christ.

It is surely very natural for us to speak first concerning the riches of pardon, the wealth that may be ours in the forgiveness of sins, which Christ obtained for us by becoming poor for our sakes. When we study the history of humanity we cannot fail to observe that there is no greater blessing possible to man than the consciousness that his sins are forgiven, that he is at peace with God. The darkest pages of the history of our Christianity during the darkest ages—pages recording the sale of indulgences which called forth the heroic protest of Martin Luther—show us how sleepless is the longing of the sinful soul, and how willingly the sinner will part with earthly good to obtain the barest possibility of divine forgiveness. The sad history of superstitious souls who still bring their sums of money, small and great, to some earthly altar in order to ameliorate the supposed condition of their friends in purgatory, is also a constant testimony to the conscience in man that drives him, as a drowning man grasps at a straw, to clutch at anything that promises divine forgiveness for human sin. But if one could thus buy with money or penance

or sacrifice of any earthly kind the forgiveness of God for one's sins, what a poor thing it would be, after all, with its conditions of trade and barter, contrasted with that precious revelation of God's heart in the Gospel which represents him as giving Jesus Christ to come from heaven to earth, and here to toil and suffer and sorrow and die in order to win us away from our sins and bring us the joy and wealth of pardon!

As another has well said, a divine gift like forgiveness differs from a material favor in that it has power and potency in itself. Whatever there is in a watch or a diamond, or any such souvenir, must be attracted to it and gathered about it by association. It has no inherent virtue. If forgiveness were only a release from retribution, while it would be better than any material boon, yet it would be in many ways like it; but it is much more. It is a living and beneficent influence, and not only restores the forgiven one, but lifts him to a higher plane. Those whom God forgives strive thereafter to be like him. What great wealth there is here for every one of us! And, thank God, it is for *every one of us* who will forsake his sins and accept pardon through the Lord Jesus. If there is anyone here this morning who doubts that God is willing to forgive, let me urge upon you this great wealth that is within your reach.

George Macdonald, the novelist-preacher, tells the story of a fair young girl who was greatly given up to the service of Christ, and who, hearing of a poor woman dying in want and ignorance only a few blocks away, decided to visit her. She was met

at the very door of the wretched home with a rebuke, and gained entrance only by a quiet, persistent manner and gentle grace peculiar to her nature. A most woe-begone sight met her eyes. Lying on a dirty cot a woman hopelessly ill met her proffered kindness with an angry scowl. At first she would not listen to her words, and refused to acknowledge the little acts of kindness which the young missionary delighted in. By and by, however, she grew to watch for her coming, her face lighting up with a smile. She could not realize at first the possibility that any one could have an interest in her. She was a poor, miserable sinner, a blot on the earth; yet here she was being ministered to by this fair and beautiful being. One day as the young girl sought her bedside, the miserable sufferer cried: "My little sister, my beautiful sister! I knew you would come."

This was just what the wise young Christian girl had been waiting for, the appearance of trust in the human in this barren soul, which must precede trust in the divine. She hastened to tell her of another kinship, that of God the Father, Christ the Son, a love whose depth and breadth no mind can measure.

The dull face lighted up, the listless hands were lifted. "But not for me," she cried, "not for me."

"Yes," was the softly spoken answer, "'the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.'"

"Then that must mean me," she said, softly, "for I have always been lost and wretched."

Christ has purchased for us by his poverty un-

searchable riches in aspiration, purpose, and hope. No one can study the life of Jesus and meditate upon his parables and promises without being brought into a larger, grander world, and breathing a new atmosphere of the spirit which is wholesome and invigorating. Lucy Larcom sings, not only with poetic but with spiritual insight:

> "The best friend is an atmosphere
> Warm with all inspirations dear,
> Wherein we breathe the large, free breath
> Of life that has no taint of death.
> Our friend is an unconscious part
> Of every true beat of our heart.
> A strength, a growth, whence we derive
> God's health that keeps the world alive.
>
> "The best friend is horizon, too,
> Lifting unseen things into view,
> And widening every petty claim
> Till lost in some sublimer aim;
> Blending all barriers in the great
> Infinities that round us wait.
> Friendship is an eternity
> Where soul with soul walks, heavenly free."

The friendship of Jesus Christ envelops the soul in such an atmosphere of hope and courage, enriches it with this sublime resource.

The Christian has sorrow and trial like other people, but he has a background of infinite strength. Habakkuk, in his prophecy, which "for grandeur and sublimity of conception, for vigor and fervor of expression, for gorgeousness of imagery, and for melody of language, is regarded as among the first productions of Hebrew literature," furnishes us with a beautiful and forceful illustration of the

riches of him who hopes in God. For though the prophet lived in perilous times, and saw much of sin and strife, and begins his message in the minor key, before he strikes the last note of his elegy he breaks forth into one of the most hopeful and inspiring strains that ever came from an inspired pen:

> "Although the fig tree shall not blossom,
> Neither shall fruit be in the vines;
> The labor of the olives shall fail,
> And the fields shall yield no meat;
> The flock shall be cut off from the fold,
> And there shall be no herd in the stalls:
> Yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
> I will joy in the God of my salvation.
> The Lord God is my strength."

It is this glorious gospel of hope, inspiring humanity to lofty purpose and enriching us with the assurance of everlasting life, that will save the world from despair and death. The present can be endured with patience, and the future, which is so full of foreboding and terror to the mere worldling, can be anticipated with gladness and tender yearning by those who are inspired with the Christian's hope. Such souls can sing with the poet:

> "The unknown shore, the unknown shore,—
> I see it in my dreams,
> And in my blissful waking hours
> So beautiful it seems!
> I fain would launch my earthly bark
> Upon the open sea,
> To reach the distant unknown shore
> So radiant to me.

"O flower-bedecked! O dew-begemmed!
The wondrous unknown shore!
And they who stand upon its banks
Nor weep nor sorrow more.
Green pastures lie the entire way,
The water by it flows;
The Saviour's lovely lilies grow
Beside the Sharon rose.

"The golden flood comes shimmering down,
Palm trees are bathed in light;
Out from among the branches flit
Strange birds with plumage bright.
Sweet notes are heard 'mid rustling leaves,
Harp tones are floating o'er;
Seraphic songs by angels sung
Echo on that fair shore.

"I see no specter on the shore:
The living Christ is there!
He beckons me with open hands,
He listens to my prayer.
O Soul, go forth without a fear
To find the unknown shore,
Where all thy darkness, dread, and doubts
Shall be for thee no more."

Again, Christ has purchased for us great riches of joy in the service of God and our fellow-men. I fear there are many people who go along the way of life sincerely desiring to be consistent Christians, but who do not enter into this wealth of joy which the Saviour has purchased for them at so great a cost. Dr. Daniel Steele very beautifully illustrates the difference between the Christian who tries to keep God's law entirely from a sense of duty and the Christian who enters into great joy and glad-

ness in doing his duty because of the love which overflows his soul in meditating on the Lord's goodness to him in Jesus Christ by a comparison of the conscript and the volunteer soldier. The impulse which thrusts the man who has been drafted into the field is fear. When the news comes that his name has been drawn, and that the strong arm of the law has seized him to push him into the front of the battle, his cheeks turn pale and his heart sinks within him. Nevertheless, he puts on the military uniform and shoulders his knapsack though it seems to weigh a ton. Reluctantly he leaves home, and wearily journeys to the conscript camp, strongly tempted to slip away from the officers and escape from the country; but the fear of the law and his weak love for his native land overcome this temptation. He murmurs at the hardness of his rations, the discomforts of the camp, the severity of the discipline. Yet he bravely does his duty. The law, like a bayonet behind him, drives him into the battle, where he fights like a hero. Yet he does not enjoy the privations and perils of the service. Every hour he wishes that he could avoid the disagreeable duties of a soldier's life. Now all the while he sees the volunteer enduring the weary marches with patriotic songs and with cheerful smiles rushing into battle as to a banquet. He sees him brought back mortally wounded, borne on a stretcher, blessing the old flag of his regiment as it fades away from his glassy eyes, and thanking God for a country worth suffering and dying for. The man who has been drafted into the service notes with shame the contrast between the spirit of

this volunteer and his own cold, apathetic, reluctant service, and hides his blushing face from his comrades with the earnest, unspoken prayer for the inspiration of nobler feelings toward his country. Now suppose the prayer of the conscript is heard, and that a baptism of patriotism descends upon his soul. Under this new revelation his country stands before him as the chief among ten thousand nations and the altogether lovely. He gladly shoulders his musket, and runs with eager delight to the thickest of the fray, to drive back those who are trampling beneath their feet the glorious old flag, the emblem of the object dearest to his heart, and for the honor of which he would gladly give his life. He has passed through a crisis in his military experience. As Dr. Steele so graphically puts it: "A new motive power has taken up its abode behind his will—love, instead of fear—and it throws a halo about the hardest tasks, changes suffering into enjoyment, and transfigures death itself into an envied martyrdom. He is a new man. The temptation to desert, which once cost him a struggle to resist, never troubles him now. His rations are wonderfully palatable, and his knapsack is a softer bolster for his head as he sweetly slumbers between the corn hills than the downy pillow awaiting his return in his distant home. He has found out the secret that love knows no burdens, feels no hardships, in the service of its object."

Let us look honestly into our own hearts and see whether we are living the lives of men and women who have been drafted into the service through fear and the constraint of law, or have come to

know the joy and gladness of a loving service, rallying about the Captain of our salvation. I covet for every one of you the riches of this joyous service. We know that the Saviour intended this for us, for he said to his disciples that his joy should remain in them and that it was his divine purpose that their joy should be full. Paul was rejoicing in the riches of this gladness of service when he exclaimed: "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

We can have only a moment to consider one of the greatest treasures which the amazing sacrifice of Jesus Christ has purchased for us and which may be found in the rich fellowship which comes to the Christian. What a glorious thing it is to become "a fellow-citizen with the saints!" The man or woman who enters upon sincere discipleship to Christ enters into fellowship with the noblest and purest souls on earth or in heaven, for death itself cannot break the golden chain of this sublime communion.

A Scotch school journal recently published this story: The crack batsman of a school cricket team was the only son of a gentleman who for many years had been blind. He had played and loved the game in his boyhood; and when his son was

old enough to take a part in it he would be led to the field every time he played, and anxiously follow every stroke through the eyes of his companions. Upon returning home the game would be eagerly discussed, and the son would advise his father of every detail. Last summer the father died suddenly. The next week, to the surprise of the school, Tom, who mourned bitterly for his father, asked to take his place in the team. He played with unusual care and brilliancy, and, when the game was over, went to the umpire.

"How did I play?" he asked, anxiously.

"Never better. You outdid yourself," was the reply.

"I am so glad," the boy said, as he turned away, "because it was the first time my father ever saw me bat."

How many there are of us who have friends watching us from the unseen world whose fellowship, though broken to earthly eyes, is yet divinely real to us, and inspires us to be true to the loftiest ideals and the sublimest service!

Brothers and sisters, I call upon you to rejoice this morning in the riches unsearchable and precious which the Saviour has laid at our feet. Let us enter fully upon their enjoyment with grateful hearts. Life may have its burdens and its cares and its dangers for us, but "if God be for us, who can be against us?" We have been marred and scarred in many a battle, some of us, and many a priceless treasure has seemed to be swallowed up by the waves and lost in shipwreck; but he who has watched over it all is able to keep that which we have com-

mitted to him "against that day" when all wrong shall be righted and all righteousness shall be crowned. Rejoicing in the riches of our inheritance we may surely sing with Lucy Fleming:

"I watched the white sails as they spread
Their wings, like birds set free;
And some o'er distant waves will glide,
Some in the wished-for haven bide,
And some—be lost at sea.

"And thus, upon life's changeful main,
While Hope sang merrily,
Full many a barque from off the strand
We launched with eager heart and hand,
Nor dreamt of loss at sea.

"But were their treacherous rocks and shoals
All, all unknown to thee?
It matters not—the heart doth know
That cruel storm hath sunken low
The venture out at sea.

"Mayhap it was no costly freight,
Tho' rich to you or me;
And memory, as the days go by,
Still counteth o'er with tearful eye
Her treasures lost at sea.

"Ah, well, there is a haven sweet
Where shipwreck cannot be;
Sad hearts, who sit in patient pain,
There shall ye gather back again
Much that was lost at sea."

XV.

The Enemies of Spiritual Life.

"He hath barked my fig tree."—Joel i, 7.

I SAW on the side of the street the other day a large, splendidly formed tree, with widespreading branches, without a leaf upon it. It stood there with its long limbs and slender twigs ugly and unclothed in the hot sun. The tree was evidently dead, and when I sought the reason I saw that for several feet up from the ground the bark had been nearly all taken off, so much of it having been removed that the beautiful tree, which had been for so many years an ornament to the street and the delight of admiring eyes, had succumbed to this vandalism, and its life had perished. As I looked at it the truth was borne in upon me that a tree does not need to be cut down in order to be destroyed; it is only necessary to bark it to cause its vital currents to dry up; and I thought of these words of Joel, telling of the destruction of a proud people: "He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree; he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white." As I meditated on the wreck of the once lovely tree wrought by careless or vandal hands a sermon grew in my heart. In many places in the Bible the human character is compared to a tree. The good man is sometimes compared to the palm tree, and again to the cedar. The psalmist declares that "the trees of

the Lord are full of sap." I think it cannot but do us good to study briefly this morning two or three of the enemies that may bark the fig tree of the soul and cause spiritual dearth and disaster.

There can be no doubt that one of the greatest foes to spiritual character is *prayerlessness.* We have just read for our Scripture lesson the story of that walk of some seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus which two of the mourning disciples of the Saviour took, accompanied for a part of the way by their glorious Master, on the evening of the first Easter Day. How strange it seems to hear them opening their sad hearts to him, telling him of their fond hopes about the Christ who had been crucified, and then to listen to his words of comfort! And that scene at the gate where the Master would have gone on, but on their entreating him tenderly he went in with them and made himself known to the little group as they sat at their evening meal. How many times in the midst of the loneliness that comes on occasions to us all we have wished that we might walk with Christ visibly on the open street, and that we could entertain him in our homes, have him as a sacred guest at our tables, and be forever blessed by having him manifest himself to us also by the breaking of bread! But these are not our best hours, for to every sincere disciple of Christ there come hours of blessed communion when the Saviour is more preciously present and real than any visible manifestation could bring him. The Saviour has kept his word which he uttered to his disciples, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." To those who lift their hearts to him in sincere

prayer Christ is to-day a real comforter and friend. "Never one of his ransomed souls has journeyed patiently yet weary, footsore, discouraged and desponding along the highways of time, who has not looked for him to find him walking closely by his side and speaking sweeter words of promise and encouragement than fell from the lips of that stranger on that evening journey toward Emmaus. There will never be a darkened Christian home from which an eye of faith is turned to Jesus as comforter and Saviour which he will not enter with his blessed benedictions of peace, and both around his disciples' tables and his own he still continues and will continue to make himself known in the breaking of bread."

We often rob ourselves by shutting him away from our ordinary life. Many people seem to think that God hears in great emergencies but not in little things. As if the God who paints the dainty little Alpine flowers could be deaf or blind or forgetful about the little things that affect the children of his heart's love. Mr. Spurgeon said that he remembered hearing an acquaintance say of a very devoted and good man, "Mr. So-and-so is a gracious man, but he is very strange; for the other day he prayed to God about a key he had lost." "The person who told it to me," said Mr. Spurgeon, "regarded with astonishment the idea of praying to God about a lost key; and he seemed altogether surprised when I assured him that I prayed in like manner." "What! pray about a key?" "Yes. Please tell me how big a thing must be before you can pray about it? If a certain size is appointed we should like to have it

marked down in the Bible, that we might learn the mathematics of prayer. Would you have it recorded that if a thing is so many inches long we may pray about it? But if it happens to be about a quarter of an inch too short we must let it alone? If we might not pray about little things it would be a fearful calamity; for little things cause us great worry, and they are harder to deal with than great things. If we might not pray about minor matters it would be a terrible loss of comfort."

Some people also make the mistake of supposing that they in some unexplained way degrade their religion—make it common, as it were—by bringing it prominently into the daily household rounds. There could not be a greater mistake than this, for simple, unaffected, genuine worship exalts whatever it touches; it dignifies and ennobles and makes what are otherwise common things sacred. An Australian editor relates this incident concerning some children whom he was watching as they played "hide the handkerchief." After a while little Jack, whose turn it was to hide the handkerchief, went to the opposite end of the room and tried to secrete it under the cushion of a big chair. Freddie immediately walked over to him and said, in a low, gentle voice, "Please, Jack, don't hide the handkerchief there; that is father's kneeling place." "Father's kneeling place!" It seemed like sacred ground to the man who listened, as it did to the little boy; and by and by, as the years roll on, and that father is seen no more on earth, the memory of that hallowed spot will leave an impression upon those young hearts that time and change can never efface, and it

will remain as one of the most blessed memories of the old home. I fear the spiritual life of many a home tree is barked through lack of prayer, for lack of that atmosphere of sincere worship of God which makes the home not only a beautiful and a lovely, but a holy, place.

Another vandal who can and often does bark the most beautiful human tree until all its spiritual vigor is destroyed is *selfishness*. There is an ancient legend which tells the story of an old man who was in the habit of traveling from place to place with a sack hanging behind his back and another in front of him. In the one behind him he tossed all the kind deeds of his friends, where they were quite hid from view; and he soon forgot all about them. In the one hanging around his neck under his chin he put all the sins which the people he knew committed; and these he was in the habit of turning over and looking at as he walked along day by day.

One day, to his surprise, he met a man wearing, just like himself, a sack in front and one behind. He went up to him and began feeling his sack.

"What have you got there, my friend?" he said, giving the sack in front a good poke.

"Stop, don't do that!" cried the other; "you'll spoil my good things."

"What things?" asked the first man.

"Why, my good deeds," answered the new comer. "I keep them all in front of me, where I can always see them and take them out and air them. See, here is the half dollar I put in the plate last Sunday, and the shawl I gave the beggar girl, and the mittens I gave to the crippled boy, and the penny I

gave to the organ-grinder; and here is even the benevolent smile I bestowed on the crossing sweeper at my own door, and— "

"And what's in the sack behind you?" asked the first traveler, who thought his companion's good deeds would never come to an end.

"Tut, tut," said number two. "There is nothing I care to look at in there. That sack holds what I call my little mistakes."

"It seems to me that your sack of mistakes is fuller than the other," said number one.

Number two frowned. He had never thought of that. Although he had put what he called his "mistakes" out of *his* sight, everyone else could see them still. An angry reply was on his lips, when, happily, a third traveler, also carrying two sacks, as they were, overtook them.

The first two men at once pounced on the stranger.

"What do you carry in your sack?" cried one.

"Let's see your goods," said the other.

"With all my heart," said the stranger; "for I have a goodly assortment, and I like to show them. This sack," said he, pointing to the one hanging in front of him, "is full of the good deeds of others."

"Your sack looks nearly touching the ground. It must be a pretty heavy weight to carry," observed number one.

"There you are mistaken," replied the stranger; "the weight is only such as sails are to a ship, or wings are to an eagle. It helps me onward."

"Well, your sack behind you can be of little good to you," said number two; "it appears to be empty, and I see it has a great hole in the bottom of it."

"I did it on purpose," said the stranger; "for all the evil I hear of people I put in there, and it falls through and is lost. So you see I have no weight to drag me down backward."

It is the glory of the unselfish soul that in seeking the good of others he finds his own greatest good. Blessed are they who find the Master in dealing with their brothers and sisters in the common walks of life. A poet whose name I do not know sings with great clearness and fidelity to the Scripture truth the song of "The Stranger,"[1] which it is possible for us to illustrate in our daily lives:

"A poor wayfaring man of grief
Hath often crossed me on my way,
Who sued so humbly for relief,
That I could never answer nay.
I had not power to ask his name,
Whither he went, or whence he came,
Yet there was something in his eye
That won my love, I know not why.

"Once when my scanty meal was spread,
He entered, not a word he spake,—
Just perishing for want of bread.
I gave him all; he blessed it, brake
And ate,—but gave me part again.
Mine was an angel's portion then;
For while I fed, with eager haste,
That crust was manna to my taste.

"I spied him where a fountain burst
Clear from the rock; his strength was gone;
The heedless water mocked his thirst,
He heard it, saw it hurrying on;
I ran to raise the sufferer up;
Thrice from the stream he drained my cup;
Dipt, and returned it running o'er.
I drank, and never thirsted more.

"'Twas night; the floods were out; it blew
A winter hurricane aloof;
I heard his voice abroad, and flew
To bid him welcome to my roof.
I warmed, I clothed, I cheered my guest,
Laid him on my own couch to rest,
Then made the hearth my bed, and seemed
In Eden's garden while I dreamed.

"Stript, wounded, beaten, nigh to death,
I found him by the highway side;
I roused his pulse, brought back his breath,
Revived his spirit and supplied
Care, oil, refreshment; he was healed.
I had myself a wound concealed,
But from that hour forgot the smart,
And peace bound up my broken heart.

"In prison cell I saw him next, condemned
To meet a traitor's death at morn;
The tide of lying tongues I stemmed,
And honored him 'midst shame and scorn.
My friendship's utmost zeal to try
He asked if I for him would die?
The flesh was weak, my blood ran chill,
But the free spirit cried, 'I will.'

"Then in a moment to my view
The stranger darted from disguise;
The tokens in his hands I knew,
My Saviour stood before my eyes!
He spake and my poor name he named:
'Of me thou hast not been ashamed;
These deeds shall thy memorial be;
Fear not, thou did'st them unto me.'"

How hard it is for some of us to learn that it is not by hoarding up the good gifts of God, but by putting them out to service, that we are truly enriched by them! Ever and anon we are shocked

by the revealment of the life-story of some poor old miser who found only misery and wretchedness while he lived and a horrible death in the end as the result of hoarding up the treasure which God intended to make his own life and that of his wife and children as well as his neighbors, happier and more wholesome. God's universe is built on the plan that life is maintained by giving and not by hoarding.

Away over yonder on the western side of the continent, where the sun sets in the sea, I wandered on the summit of a range of mountains, and came to a little spring that bubbled out at the head of a dark cañon. I was in a dreamy mood that morning, and as the spring sent forth the little brook I heard it say to it, "Now hurry down the mountain side, and out through the deep gorge, and pour this water into the river that flows through yonder broad valley." Away went the little brook, singing as it went, and hurrying on to bring its precious waters to the river. After it had left the mountain, and was working its way out through the foothills to the plain, it came along beside a stagnant pool.

"Good morning, little brook," cried the pool. "Where are you going in such a hurry?"

"I am going to the river to carry this water which God has given me."

"You are a very silly little thing," said the pool; "don't you know that the hot days of summer will soon be here, and that if you waste your water the way you are doing, when the sun shines on you in August you'll dry up and die?"

"Well," said the brook, "if I am to die so soon as that I'd better work as hard as I can while I last. If the heat is going to rob me of all my treasure, then I'd better do all the good possible with it while I have it. Good-bye, Madam Pool," said the brook, and away it ran singing as it went so cheery a song that it made everybody glad that heard it.

The stagnant old pool smiled with contempt and said to herself, "Lucky for me I am not such a silly fool as that brook! Not a drop of my water will I give up, but I'll keep it all for my own use when the hot days come."

Sure enough, after a while the summer came with great heat and fell upon the little brook. But during all the long months of the springtime it had been making friends with the trees; it had slaked the thirst of their roots, and so encouraged and comforted them that their great crests were covered with beautiful green, and now the trees crowded to the brink of the little brook and threw their long branches over it like mammoth umbrellas. The sun looked down through the branches on its courageous face, and I heard the sunbeams say, "Don't be afraid, we won't hurt you." The birds bathed themselves at its mossy side and sang songs of thanksgiving; the flowers blossomed there in the shade and breathed their fragrance on its bosom; horses and cattle and flocks of sheep came to its side to drink and cool their hot feet in its purling flood; the farmhouses along the way took from it enough not only to slake their thirst, but to turn the mill-wheel for the neighborhood; and man and beast and bird and tree all blessed the little brook.

But what happened to that very wise, selfish pool? Ah, you know what happened to it before I tell you! It became stagnant and filthy and unwholesome. A bad-smelling slime gathered on the surface of it until, after a while, it was so dirty and noisome that neither birds nor beasts would drink of it though they were suffering of thirst. And when the August sun was hottest it dried up altogether and left only a vile smell to tell where it had been. But the little brook never lacked for water, but went on singing:

"I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

"With many a curve my banks I fret
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

"I chatter, chatter, as I go
To join the brimming river,
For men may come, and men may go;
But I go on forever."

The brook goes on forever because God takes care of those things that serve him with generous purpose. The brook gave all it had to the river, and the river bore it onward to the sea. The sun shone upon the sea and warmed it. The vapors rose from the heaving surface of the ocean and formed clouds. The trade winds carried the clouds far above the mountain tops, where they emptied their white treasures in purest snow, and thus that

mountain reservoir in the secret places of the rocks was kept always full; though it gave freely of what it had freely received it never dried up. In the language of the Saviour to an inquirer of old, "Go and do thou likewise."

XVI.

The Loom of Life.

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God."—Rom. viii, 28.

THIS world is God's factory. There are multitudes of busy weavers, both visible and invisible, forever plying their shuttles on the loom of life, weaving the warp and woof of human experience. Every life is a combination of many threads, and almost every day's experience shows the bringing together of influences from all parts of the earth. Earth and sky, law and literature and art, past and present and future, all yield their threads into the weaver's ready hands to help make up the finished robe of every day's life experience. Few if any of us appreciate how numerous and diversified are the "all things" which are constantly working together under God's loving eye to bring about the good result which he designs for them that love him.

Christopher Benson, in a recently published lyric, sets forth in a very graphic way something of the diversity of blessing which enters into our common life:

"I praise Thee, Father, for the sky,
Thy soft, translucent canopy,
The pompous cloudland trailing by;

"For large and level plains that swell
To wooded height, sequestered dell,
Not waste, but tilled and watered well;

"For elms that break in cloudy green,
With helmet roofs that peep between,
Or orchards rather guessed than seen.

"I praise thee, Father, for the prize
Of friendship, whether wild or wise,
Of sudden glance of answering eyes;

"For motions of bewildering grace,
For spirits sweeter than the face
That screens them; for that lost embrace;

"For stubborn hopes that will not die;
Though flouted by the sullen sky,
And based on saddest memory;

"For wholesome shame that strongly schools
The raging impulses of fools
By sudden pangs or patient rules;

"For love that, when my spirit trips,
Through the cold throng toward me slips,
And rains soft kisses on my lips.

"I praise thee, Father, though thou thrust
Me crying, in the common dust,
Not as I will, but as I must."

But we are assured that God will not thrust us in the "common dust" except for our good, and when the dust is better for us than the clearest sky.

There is something splendid about the appeal to consciousness which Paul makes in this Scripture. He does not say we believe or hope or desire, but "we *know* that all things work together for good to them that love God." A little reflection shows us that this must be so in the nature of things. If we love God we will keep his law and come naturally into harmony with him and his government in the world. If we look about us in nature we see that all things work together for good to those things

which are obedient to God's laws. The branch draws nourishment from the sun and the air and the trunk or vine so long as it retains its proper relation to the parent stalk; but it is no sooner severed than the sun, which was its inspiration and comfort, becomes its destroyer. So Christ says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

The Bible everywhere puts obedience as the unalterable test of love. "If a man love me, he will keep my words," said the Master; and yet again, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." If we thus love God with a love which binds us to him in obedience, so that day by day we seek to please him, not seeking to have our own way, but restraining ourselves for his sake, not yielding to our own tempers, but being constrained by the love of Christ, not feasting our own indulgence, but denying ourselves that we may be like him, then, just as sure as it is God's world, and not the devil's, all things must and do work together for our good. It is not conceivable that the omnipotent and all-wise God will war against himself, and if we are the children of his love, loving him with that obedience which brings us into harmony with his nature, then it is no longer a matter of belief, it is a living consciousness, a certainty. "We know" that all things are now working together for our good.

As Dr. Lyman Abbott says, this does not mean that the tears are all wiped away, the sorrows are all ended, the tribulations all over; but that because God is love, and because we are living under his roof and with him, we know that the sorrows and the tears are themselves God's ministering servants. We no longer think of pain as penalty, and when grief has come into our homes wonder why God has set the seal of his wrath upon us. We know that it is a part of the "all things" which are working together with loving purpose to make life sweeter and richer than it would be without it. The most beautiful Brussels lace is spun in a darkened room, the only light being admitted through a small window where it falls directly on the pattern; so human life can be wrought out in its most beautiful figures only with shadows, and we may sing,

> "I thank Thee more that all my joy
> Is touched with pain;
> That shadows fall on brightest hours,
> That thorns remain;
> So that earth's bliss may be my guide
> And not my chain."

The all-conquering spirit of this triumphant Scripture ought to make us the most hopeful and cheerful people in the world. It ought to assure us that the clouds which look threatening and dark are, as Cowper understood, "big with mercy," and shall break with rich blessings on our heads. Most of the bitter forebodings which come to us—either because of depression of spirit through weakness of the body, or as temptations of the evil one—are prophecies that never happen.

Dr. George Matheson, the eloquent blind preacher of Edinburgh, Scotland, recently said that he had often praised God for his songs in the night, but had not sufficiently thanked him that the night itself was not deeper. We are told that there are "ships that pass in the night"—golden opportunities that have been lost in the darkness. And doubtless there have been such. But I think the larger majority of the ships that pass in the night are not ships of gold. I am convinced that the vast proportion of the opportunities that escape us in the darkness are opportunities not of gain, but of loss. There is not one sea, however troubled, in which I have not discovered a ship that passed in the night—a ship that was bearing trouble greater still. I have read that in Gethsemane the Son of man received strength at the end; yes, but he received a shield at the beginning. "The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?" In the midst of his sea he saw a ship of trouble that had passed in the night. This cup might have come without his Father; it might have been an accident, a chance, a contingency. He had been shielded from that, and he anointed the shield.

O thou divine Man, let me anoint the shield with thee. Let me mark the blows that have not fallen; let me count the ships that have not come. When I am oppressed and weary I would always hear a voice saying, "You have not resisted unto blood." I am always forgetting the manna when I view my wilderness; I see not the bright lights in the clouds, nor the shade that might have been deeper. Teach me to anoint my shield! Tell me

of the arrows that were broken before they fell. Show me the pitfalls that my feet passed by. Light me to the darkness which my eye did not meet. Let me see the disappearing sail of the sorrow that missed me. Guide me to the path of dangers unborn, of tears unshed, of cries unspoken. Let me gaze on the unwinged lightning; let me hear the unuttered thunder; let me read the page that was not suffered to be written. When I am in perplexity lead me to the valley that is lower than I.

To the eye of our unworthy skepticism our fond Christian hopes are too good to come true, and the enemy of our souls is always threatening us with the fear that everything is worse than it looks. But if we live in the spirit of this Scripture we shall take exactly the other attitude, we shall know that things are better than they seem, and that the triumph of righteousness is coming sooner than we think. Lila North sings:

"Sooner than we think, the morning comes;
Though few the stars, and faint the moon, and long the weary night,
Yet at the entrance of the east the darkness paler grows,
A waiting hush is over all—the heart of heaven knows
The chariot of the conquerer, his triumph train of light;
A soft wind stirs, a bird awakes,
Over the sea the sunlight breaks,—
The morning comes!

"Sooner than we sometimes think, the springtime comes;
The winter winds that wrestled long, reluctant own defeat;
A gentler but a mightier touch has warmed the barren hills,
And all the valleys sing with streams, with life the woodland thrills—
That secret life that stirs the rose to part her petals sweet;

The bluebird carols wide and loud,
Under our feet the violets crowd,—
The springtime comes!

"Sooner than we sometimes think, love enters life;
The half read prophecies of years shall find fulfillment soon;
Though thou hast laid thy best born hope upon God's altar-stone,
A voice shall stay thy lifted hand and give thee back thine own;
The long discordant chimes of life peal forth in perfect tune;
All tenderest lights of earth and skies
Slowly dawn in thy watching eyes,—
Love enters life!"

With all the power I have I want to emphasize this fact: As Christians we are here to represent the hopeful spirit of Jesus Christ on the earth. There can be no more inconsistent picture anywhere than those slanderous cartoons of the Master which we sometimes represent when we go with our heads hanging down, morose and grumbling and hopeless. Some people are being always tempted to give way to a feeling of cynical criticism which sees little or no good in anything, and finds a rotten spot in life's sweetest joys and fondest ambitions. Some one aptly describes these people as "the knights of the sorrowful figure." But the disciples of Jesus have no right to go about in any such masquerade. It is not a fancy or a dream, but the real truth, that there is always a bright side to life and to every experience in life, and the bright side is the right side and the side where God is. There is no sorrow so dark but you may delve out from under it if you will keep your face toward the light and dig with courageous heart. Helen Keller, deaf, dumb, and

blind, joyously welcomed those who tunneled into her imprisoned soul along the single nerve of sensation in the palm of her hand, and is conquering vast fields of knowledge. At fourteen years of age she received $250 for a magazine article. How this ought to shame some of us who lie down lazily in front of obstacles which a little pluck and self-denying exertion would carve into a stairway for higher achievement! It is said of the German soldiers that they nearly always sing before a battle, and that it helps them along wonderfully. Those who go about Christian work with long faces and no joy in their hearts get little done, or do their work in a way that is anything but a good advertisement of their religion. We ought to go to Christian work every day rejoicing in the Lord, like the victorious soldiers at the battle of Leuthen. They sang a Christian song as they marched to the engagement. A general asked the king if he should stop the singing. "No," said the king, "men that can sing like that can fight." All beautiful things in nature are hopeful and courageous. I noticed the other day that a florist in Mayenne, France, has offered a prize of thirty thousand francs to any one who can produce a plant on which blue roses will bloom, but I'll warrant he is perfectly safe in his offer. I wish it were as hard to find blue Christians, for surely it is true that that kind have no fragrance to attract others to their Master.

Ah! but some one says it is easy enough to say that when you are well and strong, or when everything is prosperous; but when the pain is upon you, so that at night you wish it were morning, and at

morning you wish it were night again; when disaster falls like a pall of darkness and your fondest hopes are withered, how about it then? Why, we should say then, just as in prosperity, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." How foolish it would be for the orchard tree if, shrinking under the pruning knife of the gardener, it should cry out, "Surely the farmer has forgotten me or he is angry with me, otherwise he would not permit me to suffer like this." So if your trouble comes to you in the way of doing your duty it is the seal of your childhood to God. Dr. MacLaren, the great English preacher, tells of a man who went home once from the army after being absent for many years, and sought out his aged mother. He knew his mother the moment he saw her, but the old lady did not recognize her son. It so happened that when he was a child his mother had accidentally wounded his wrist with a knife. To comfort him she cried, "Never mind, my bonnie bairn, your mither will ken you by that when you are a man." When the soldier's mother would not believe that the grave, fine-looking gentleman could be her own child he turned up his sleeve and exclaimed, "Mither, mither, dinna ye ken that?" In a moment they were in each other's arms. The Lord knows the scars of his children. He acknowledges them by the marks of correction and discipline. What God is to us in the way of trouble and trial is but his acknowledgment of our own true sonship. And how different it will all appear to us when we look back upon it from a little distance. It will be as when we look back upon a cloud which an hour

ago enveloped us in gloomy folds, but having now passed by is glorified by the sunlight.

"Looking back upon life's trodden way,
Gleams and greenness linger on the track;
Distance melts and mellows all to-day,
Looking back.

"Rose and purple and silvery gray,
Is that the cloud we called so black?
Evening harmonizes all to-day,
Looking back.

"Foolish feet so prone to halt or stray,
Foolish heart so restive on the rack,
Yesterday we sighed, but not to-day,
Looking back."

If we are fully possessed with the victorious spirit of our Christianity we shall be able to use hard experiences—even those caused by the wrong-doing of others toward us—as helps to our upward and onward progress. A gentleman going one day into his garden had his attention attracted by a huge weed growing in the midst of his peas. He seized hold of it to pull it up by the roots, when he noticed that the peavine, seeing that it could not get rid of its enemy, had, with the wisdom that men and women do not always manifest, turned it into a means of ascent, climbing up by its help into the sunlight. The gardener was something of a philosopher, and the retaliation seemed to him to be so just, the act so brave, and the aim so lofty, that he said to the vine, "Go on; you are doing the wisest and best thing possible; turn your enemy, whatever his intent, into an instrument of advan-

tage; and remember the more rank your enemy is and the higher he grows, the stronger will be your support and the higher your ascent." As he looked upon the weed he said to it, "Good enough for you. If you insist upon growing in my garden you must work together for good to all that I cultivate in it." In a like manner it is possible for "all things," including in our present world so much that is vicious and evil, to be made to work together for the good of the children of God.

It is also true that if we live in this lofty spirit we shall escape many of the vexatious trials which come to men and women of less faith and confidence, for we shall have mounted above them. One of the most exhilarating and beautiful sights that comes to a mountain climber is when he stands upon some lofty summit and watches the storms sweep down the cañons and deluge the valleys beneath him, covering them with darkness and gloom, while he, far above the clouds and storms, is basking in the unclouded sunlight. He who lives in fellowship with Jesus Christ, abiding in this glorious consciousness that all things are working together for good for him, will see the upper side of many a storm cloud that drenches with pitiless severity the faithless worldling who is without God and without hope in the world. For him, as for other men, life's procession will be constantly passing on—from childhood to youth, from youth to middle life, and ever onward to old age; but all these things will be working together to produce something that is better and brighter—a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"—yet to come.

"I watched the crocus, purple, white, and yellow,
Outbursting in the spring;
The snowy air grew soft and sweet and mellow,
And birds began to sing.

"But soon the crocus faded, and I sorrowed;
When, lo! the tulips came,
Of brilliant red, and from the sun they borrowed
Their glowing hearts of flame.

"And they, too, passed, but daisies white, and clover,
Clustered on hill and moor;
And clematis and roses clambered over
The homes of rich and poor.

"'Alas!' I said, 'this earth we love and cherish
Will fade away in space.'
Take courage, heart! we change but do not perish,
For heaven will take its place."

XVII.

Christ's Bid Against the World for an Immortal Soul.

"Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said, . . . Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.—Matt. xix, 27–29.

THE commercial instinct is very strong in human nature. It crops out early, and the boy begins to swap and trade and make contracts long before his toddling feet are allowed out of the nursery. As we grow older this instinct of our nature is sharpened and developed in the competitions of life. It is recognized everywhere through the Bible, and appealed to constantly both in the Old and in the New Testaments. This is very natural, because the Bible is the book of human life. Through the mouth of Isaiah the Lord makes a strong bid for the devotion and service of Israel by saying, "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron."

There is a perfectly natural human sound about it, then, when we hear Peter saying to the Lord, speaking for himself and his little group of friends, "We have forsaken all and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" Peter's "all" would have seemed very small to some people, but it was all he had, and it meant just as much to him to give his all, and possibly more, than if he had been a millionaire. I think there is something very suggest-

ive and full of instruction in the serious way in which Jesus treats Peter's question. The Master does not remind Peter that his old fishing boat and half-worn nets, that were in need of constant mending to keep them going at all, were rather an insignificant sacrifice; but he who knew what was in man saw at a glance that there was the same quality of devotion required, the same lofty spirit of self-sacrifice involved in renouncing the fishing boat and the nets and the associations of his youth and young manhood that would be required in the giving up of a kingdom. And so, instead of making little of the sacrifices which these friends had made for him, he encourages their hearts by assuring them that the reward will be a hundredfold greater, and added to it the joy and blessedness of an immortal life in heaven.

I wish to bring the message of this Scripture incident to those who are hesitating or delaying or regretfully, it may be, refusing to give Christ the supreme devotion of their lives, and yield their all to his service because they feel that what they would be compelled to renounce is very large. I do not doubt that some of you are reasoning as Peter did, and thinking of all the things you will have to give up if you become a Christian, and are saying to yourselves, "If we do this will it pay? What shall we have?" I am perfectly frank to admit that religion must stand this test. If it could be shown that the people who refuse the claims of Jesus Christ and reject his standards of living come nearer attaining life's great end, find more peace and rest of soul, build up richer and nobler natures,

and in the judgment of humanity and themselves have made the best of their lives in so doing, and come down to death better satisfied with the results than do Christian people, then Christianity would certainly fail in its attempted conquest of the world, and Christ's declaration, "And I, if I be lifted up from earth, will draw all men unto me," would prove to be but an idle dream. But Christianity is always ready for that test. Its constant appeal is, "O taste and see that the Lord is good!" I am ready, therefore, to reason with any man who is saying, "What shall I have if I give up my heart and life to be a thorough and genuine disciple of Jesus Christ?" I am ready to stand by the plain declaration of the Master that such a one shall have a hundredfold for all he sacrifices, and thrown in with the bargain an immortality of glorious existence in the highest and noblest fellowships.

This question is of special interest to those who are starting in a business career, or, it may be, are well on in the journey of business success, or possibly have been caught in the meshes of business adversity and are tempted to believe that, by deviating from the strict rule of honesty and the heart-searching demands of Jesus Christ for absolute righteousness in dealing with their fellows, they can succeed better in business. I will not stop to argue and show that multitudes of men who thus yield to the seductions of the tempter end by losing both their money and their reputation, and find their home at last in a prison cell, but will admit, for the sake of comparison, that in your circumstances it is possible you may make more money by being a scoundrel,

or (if you do not like to look at your face in so clear a mirror) by yielding to certain tricky and underhand standards of trade which are contrary to the demands of Jesus Christ. But even on that basis I do assure you that you are an infinite loser; that it is better to lose the temporary advantage and retain a conscience void of offense toward God and man, and that with less money the man who pursues this course will be rewarded a hundredfold.

But there is also great interest in this question to the man who is so giving up his soul to his business career that he uses the pressure of business as an excuse for neglecting his salvation. I stand here as a messenger of God to say to you, whether you be young or old, rich or poor, that you have no right to be so engrossed in business as to peril the great aim of life itself. Not only that you have not the right to do it, but that your course is exceedingly unwise, and that you could not in any other way commit so fatal a blunder. As Henry Melvill, the great English preacher, once said, if it be a matter of fact that business does not leave time enough for religion, you are bound, at whatever worldly cost, to bring your business within narrower limits and give the redeemed hours to the far higher concerns of your soul's welfare. And if you meet me with this question of Peter, "If I give up all this, my boat and fishing-net, what shall I have therefore?" if you reason that you could only do your duty at a great loss to your business or profession, I say to you with all seriousness, drawing the answer from secular history and from observation as well as from the word of God, if you cannot be a

Christian man except by losing your business and even becoming a bankrupt, it would be a hundredfold better to have your name in the Lamb's book of life than to win the proudest business success in the world. You cannot be a loser by resolving not to lose your soul. He who demands of you your heart's supreme devotion is the proprietor of the wealth of both worlds. All the gold of the Alaskan mountains, and all the precious stones in the Australian diamond fields, as well as the glory and blessedness of heaven, are his to bestow. There is no risk to the man who yields to the claims of God.

Many a man who is envied by the thoughtless multitudes would be pitied if they only knew how greatly he had blundered and how poor and impoverished he really is in all things that are best worth having. Henry Ward Beecher many years ago told of a man whom he knew—a specimen which is far more common in these days—who held in his hands a large portion of the ways of life and the thoroughfares of the nation: He is not bad as the world goes. He is well-nigh unlimited in his control of funds. Tens of thousands of men and women think he is a wonderful man, and in some respects he is. But the question is, Is he really prosperous and successful in the great purposes of human existence? Let us open him up and see what wonderful thing is in him. The key to this man is made out of gold. We go into one chamber. It is called Taste. It has never been finished up. It has never been even lathed and plastered. There is not a window in it. There is not a carpet nor a picture nor an instru-

ment of music in it. Come out and shut up the door, turn the key in the lock. Even the call of the judgment day will not wake anything in that room. We go into another room, called Honor. It is a cold, dreary, stone-wall passage, dripping with moisture. Shut up the door of that room. No one lives there. We go on and open the door of Conscience. What is that down there in the corner? Ah, it is a poor wretch lying on a heap of rotten straw, almost dead. It raises its head and says, "I was Conscience; this is all there is left of me." Shut up the door of this sad room. Let us go on to another chamber—that of Faith. It is spacious and lofty; it is domed, and has a large, long opening to the skies. It is constructed as if some instruments were to have been here with which to sweep the heavens. But all has been let go to ruin. There is no faith there. And so we go on, from place to place and through chamber after chamber; and every one of them is unfurnished, full of unpleasant sights and sounds. If we want to find where this man really lives we have to go down in the cellar where selfishness and avarice dwell. These dark apartments are all occupied. Their huge vaults are filled with unused gains. Selfishness is strong and pride is strong, and the life of the animal and the brute is strong; but all that is sweet and generous and soulful and divine has gone to ruin.

That is what the world that rejects Christ calls a prosperous man. Now let us put over against that picture the great preacher's portrait of Aunt Janet: She had a love affair, the boys say, when she was

very young, and somehow got jilted; and she was never quite the same afterward. She always refused company. Well, what has she been doing since that time? O, she was studying till her sister was married; and then she went to live with her, and has lived with her ever since. And what has she been doing? Well, she has been taking care of her sister's children. A dependent, is she? Yes, she is to a certain extent dependent on her sister. And she is bringing up the youngsters? Yes, she devotes herself to the care of her sister's children. Let us go through her heart; for we have the key to that also. The first apartment is *sweet contentment*. Everything in it is tranquil. There is a low sound, as of music. You know not whence it comes, but it touches the chords of your heart as if it were a breath from heaven. We pass through chamber after chamber. At last we enter the room of love. O how radiant everything is! What pictures there are hanging upon the walls! How many there are that resemble the portraiture of friends! And some there are that seem to look back to friends that are gone. We step out from the room of love into the room of faith. These rooms are adjoining and the door between them is never closed. They throw light into each other. And how bright are these upper chambers of the soul! Perpetual joy reigns there morning, noon, and night. Come near and you will find that this woman's heart is full of peace and gladness. What is she doing? She is living for others. She is raising up these little children. She is like the fabled eagle that is said to have plucked the feathers from its own breast to

shield its young. She, as it were, takes her own heart and soul out to make a nest for these fledglings. Foolish people, who do not know any better, pity her; but God and the angel band that watch over her see that she lives inwardly full of the sweetest contentment and the most blessed and joyful hope. Now, I leave it to you if she is not infinitely more prosperous and successful than the man who has bankrupted himself in everything that is high and holy in order that he may minister to his selfishness and greed.

Do not misunderstand me. I would not have any man less industrious and faithful to his business obligations. I make no onslaught on riches or upon those who have business gifts and talents that make it possible for them to acquire large earthly possessions. The desire to have abundance, to lay up something as a reservoir from which one may draw in time of necessity, to have more than one needs at the moment, is a part of our human nature, and seems to me to be necessary to the very existence of society itself; but what I do urge is, to put it in the words of Jesus, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Or, to put it in the words of Paul, "Godliness is profitable in all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

This Scripture lesson is also of special interest to those who are fascinated by worldly pleasures and excitements which they feel are forbidden by the spirit of the teachings of Jesus Christ, and would have to be given up if they were in all sincerity to fol-

low him as his disciples. Now, I do not for a moment belittle the fascinations and temporary delights of worldly pleasures. Let it be clearly understood, however, that pleasure is itself the gift of God, and that no pleasure which conduces to the well-being of ourselves and our brothers and sisters will ever come under the condemnation of Christ. The pleasures that have to be renounced and given up by the disciples of Jesus are either those which are hurtful to us individually or tend to wrong others or lead them into temptation and to overthrow.

I say I do not belittle the temptations to even sinful and hurtful pleasures. Take the temptation to strong drink. There is no doubt that there is something in the excitement of that incipient intoxication produced by a glass of wine that gives momentary pleasure, and to say to a man in the midst of gay company and the fellowship of youth that he must put it aside and renounce it seems hard; but, on the other hand, when one looks at the tens of thousands of hopeless and despairing tramps who were once comfortably housed and clothed and bore good names and looked out on lives of promise, all of which they have lost by yielding to the fascinations of the wine-cup, it does not seem so hard to ask a man to give it up. When we remember that for every poor, bloated, ragged tramp, for every blear-eyed drunkard that finds his way to the police court, there are perhaps a score of others who are the family skeletons of respectable homes, whose sin some broken-hearted mother or despairing wife seeks through years of pitiless torture to cover up; when we reflect upon these desolate and lonely

firesides it does not seem so hard to ask a man to give it up.

It may not be so easy to speak with the plainness which the awful seriousness of the subject demands of the guilty pleasures of illicit and wicked passion and lust—those infatuations which have led to ruin some of the strongest and most brilliant men and women the world has ever known. Possibly I speak to some to whom the fascinations of that cup of guilty pleasure is a temptation which it seems impossible to resist. To ask in the name of Christ that that cup be thrust aside, that the quiet life of truth and righteousness be taken up in its stead, and purity maintained at the cost of the crucifixion of the hot passions of youth, seems a burden too heavy to be carried; but when one thinks of the shame and sorrow and defilement of lives which unholy lust has wrecked and left poor, burned-out, ruined things to be tossed with contempt upon the refuse-pile of human life, it does not seem so hard to enforce the claims of Jesus Christ.

We ought to remember that all these are old questions that have been threshed over and over again throughout all the generations of the past, and that the demands of Jesus are but the accumulated grain which human observation and experience have shown to be the only safe rules for human life. Moses had to deal with this very same question which troubles you, when he dwelt in the court of Pharaoh, thousands of years ago. Paul says of him, "By faith, Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people

of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." I have no doubt that when Moses made his choice and gave up his chance of being ruler over Egypt and of enjoying all the sinful pleasures of that dissolute and powerful court of Pharaoh, and went to herd sheep in the wilderness that he might maintain his integrity and be true to his God, many a giddy courtier denounced him for a Jewish fool, and pitied him with contempt for his great loss. But time showed who were the fools. The God of Moses fed the drowned and swollen carcases of Pharaoh's courtiers to the hungry crows on the shores of the Red Sea. Who does not believe now that Moses got his hundredfold recompense? I appeal to you to make the same choice. The pleasures of sin are but for a season at the best. They perish with their own using. The very appetite for them is soon cloyed. But the pleasures of a pure soul, born of the fellowships of faith and hope and love, are immortal. When Solomon was old he lost all pleasure in the sin that had tempted him from God. Abundant opportunity was left to him to continue in the most fascinating of sinful pleasures, but he tells us that they became tasteless and insipid to him, and in the midst of it all he cried out with unutterable weariness, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." But when Paul came to be an old man, and was "such a one as Paul the aged," though he had to contend with chains and imprisonment, and was threatened with the executioner's block, yet life did not lose its

interest for him. His Christian fellowships were sweeter than ever. His love for Christ and his joyous communion with him grew more precious as he came near the end, and his hope of heaven was a constant delight. In perfect exuberance of confidence and trust he exclaims: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

I covet for you all the best things, the hundredfold reward and an immortality in heaven.

XVIII.

A More Excellent Way—A Reply to Mr. Ingersoll's Lecture on "Which Way?"

"A still more excellent way show I unto you."—1 Cor. xii, 31. (Revised Version.)

WE have had in our midst again that notorious expounder of materialism and "know-nothingism" in religion, Mr. Robert G. Ingersoll. In a characteristic lecture he has proposed to show us the proper way of life. He professes to be the defender of the natural as against the supernatural. As the press have widely scattered his utterances, and silence might be regarded as a confession of inability to answer his rash and unwarranted assumptions, I invite your attention, on this occasion, to "a still more excellent way."

I have no comment to make on that portion of Mr. Ingersoll's address which discusses specifically matters pertaining to the Roman Catholic Church; but to those utterances which assert that Christianity is, as a religion, the foe of liberty, intelligence, and happiness, I call your most earnest attention, not so much to refute Mr. Ingersoll as to emphasize the splendid service which Christianity is doing for the world.

Mr. Ingersoll starts off with the assumption that the people who live for the world they are in, and without the influence of the Christian's hope of immortality, are the people who have good houses,

good food, and good raiment; books, music, art, luxury, and leisure; while, as a matter of fact, all these are the products of Christian institutions, and are not found anywhere in the world in such perfection as to be compared with Christian lands. Many savage tribes have always lived for this world and with comparatively little thought of the other; but the result has never been the production of those things which Mr. Ingersoll finds so necessary to his comfort. How strange it seems, if Christianity is the foe of intelligence and the use of reasoning powers, that all the great architects who have learned the art of beautiful construction and applied it to home building are among Christian peoples. The arts of living—such as the preparing of food and raiment—are also best understood and practiced among these same Christians whom he would have us believe have been so intellectually dwarfed by their faith. As to luxury and leisure, he must know that the wealth of the world is centered in Christian nations, and that the number of individuals who have luxury and leisure are in the proportion of a thousand to one in favor of those countries where Christianity is most universally preached and reverenced. As to books, there is no literature worth the name outside of the peoples who have been dominated by Christ and the Bible.

Speaking of literature, I must confess to a feeling of intense disgust at a plea for the destruction of Christianity in order to have good books, from the lips of this man, who has been a most notorious antagonist of laws designed to protect the minds of the young and the weak from the pernicious influ-

ence of vile literature. In 1873 a law was passed by Congress against the transmission of impure literature through the mails, under which a number of infamous scoundrels were sent to the penitentiary in punishment of their ghoulish work of flooding the country with obscene literature and filthy pictures. One would naturally suppose that against such a righteous law as that—a law appealing so strongly to the patriotism and humanity of every pure-minded citizen—it would have been impossible to find arrayed any man claiming respectability and intelligence. But, strange as it may seem, a petition was sent to Congress urging the repeal of this law, and the first name on that petition was that of Robert G. Ingersoll. When this petition was before the House of Representatives the committee of that body having it in charge made the following report, May 1, 1878: "The Committee on the Revision of the Laws, to whom was referred the petition of Robert G. Ingersoll and others, praying for the repeal or modification of sections 1,785, 3,878, 3,893, 5,389, and 2,491 of the Revised Statutes, have had the same under consideration, and have heard the petitioners at length. In the opinion of your committee the post office was not established to carry instruments of vice or obscene writings, indecent pictures or lewd books. Your committee believe that the statutes in question do not violate the Constitution of the United States, and ought not to be changed. They recommend, therefore, that the prayer of the said petition be denied." This is the man who would destroy Christianity that there might be good books!

Nothing could be more preposterous or utterly without foundation than the declaration of the lecturer that Christ was the enemy of art and music. The best art and the best music in the world have been not only created under Christian influences, but have been directly inspired by Christian sentiment and feeling. What art is there to compare with the rugged "Moses" of Michelangelo; the sublime "Transfiguration" and the glorious "Sistine Madonna" by Raphael; the "Last Supper" by Da Vinci; and the productions of others who, like them, have chosen their themes from the Bible, have been inspired by love for Christ, and have sought, above all else, to glorify him by their art? As Loring Brace well says, "No man had such extraordinary influence on the best art of northern Italy as Savonarola. He declared to the artists that the decline of art was owing to the decline of religion. He said to them that their ideas were stamped with the grossest materialism; that it was in something beyond the visible they must seek for the essence of true beauty. He urged that the more nearly the creature participates in and approaches the divine beauty the more beautiful it is, because the beauty of body depends in great measure on the beauty of the soul. He exhorted the Florentine artists that if natural virtues, like prudence, justice, force, and temperance, are ornaments of the soul, and contribute to render it beautiful, how much more beauty ought to belong to supernatural virtues, such as faith, hope, and especially charity. 'Love God first, then your neighbor,' he said, 'and your soul will be beautiful.

Every painter paints himself; that is to say, he realizes his conceptions. . . . Carnal and debauched men have the intellect obscured.' Again, he urged, 'Love is like a painter. The works of a good painter charm men so that in contemplating them one remains in suspense; sometimes one is ravished in ecstasy, and one forgets himself. This is what the love of Jesus Christ does in the soul.' " It was the influence of sermons like that, from earnest souls inspired by devotion to Jesus Christ, which aroused and inspired the artists who stored up for us the greatest treasures of art there are in the world to-day.

Music also is the handmaid of religion. Music is everywhere honored in the Bible. The psalms of David have done more to inspire a taste for music than any other book in existence. The greatest oratorios are those which treat of the life and sufferings and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The greatest composers have been reverent, God-fearing men.

Equally absurd is Mr. Ingersoll's appeal to us to forget God in our attempt to make slaves of the forces of nature. The forces of nature are slaves only where the inventive genius of man has been fired by Christian thought. Everywhere else men are slaves and nature is supreme. It is the Bible which declares that it is the divine purpose that man should "have dominion" over nature. The telegraph, the telephone, the printing press, the steamship, the locomotive, and the multiplied inventions which are bringing the forces of nature to be the slaves of men, are all the inventions of a

Christian civilization, and the peoples of the earth who have lived without God and without Christ and the Bible, and have been entirely unfettered and undwarfed by these influences, strange to say, do not have any of them, but still go trudging along on foot, or paddle their log canoe.

We find the same utter ignorance or obliviousness to the facts in his assumption that it is only infidels who live for their fellow-men, for their wives and their children, and seek to make those they love happy and shield them from the sorrows of life, while Christians live for ghosts, goblins, and phantoms, with the hope that they will have reward in another world. If this is true why is it there are no infidel hospitals, almshouses, or orphan asylums to be found anywhere on God's green earth? Christianity from the very first has had its chief characteristic in its love and care for others. It was Jesus Christ, and not some infidel philosopher, who planted the parable of "the Good Samaritan" in the heart of the race. While Jesus was on earth he went about illustrating that parable in his own life and conduct. The disciples went forth in that spirit and preached everywhere that the strong should bear the infirmities of the weak, and wherever Christianity has been established it has, as fast as it has gathered power and means, erected hospitals for the care of the sick poor, built homes for the aged and infirm, and established asylums for the maintenance and education of orphan children. And yet this apostle of suicide, who has nothing better to say to a sick old man or a woman with a broken heart than that they had best take

prussic acid and die, and whose teaching has been the direct cause of countless suicides, has the effrontery to say to us that Christianity is a religion of selfishness.

Mr. Ingersoll is no more fortunate in his declaration that the leaders of modern thought are not Christians. The only argument he gives in support of this astounding assertion is to announce the names of seven scientific investigators whose influence on the thought of mankind he proposes to weigh against the hundreds and thousands of scientists, statesmen, soldiers, historians, poets, and scholars and workers of every sort, who really lead the thought and control the destiny of the civilized world. He does not name Agassiz, Dana, or Hugh Miller, and the multitude of Christian men of science, as scholarly and as faithful to truth as any that have lived. I presume it will be generally conceded that Mr. Gladstone has as large a brain, as much scholarship, and as wide an opportunity for observation in regard to the leaders of thought in the world as Mr. Ingersoll. A little while ago this eminent statesman said to a distinguished American, "All men at the head of great movements are Christian men. During the many years I was in the Cabinet I was brought into association with sixty master minds, and all but five of them were Christian. My only hope for the world is in bringing the human mind in contact with divine revelation."

Mr. Ingersoll grows very witty in his sneer at prayer and in telling the story of a chaplain of Congress who prayed to God that wisdom might

be given to that body; but the great Benjamin Franklin, in the Constitutional Convention of 1787, introduced a motion for daily prayers, and supported it by a powerful address, in the course of which he said: "In the beginning of the contest with England, when we were sensible of danger, we had daily prayers in this room for the divine protection. Our prayers, sir, were heard; and they were graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favor. To this kind Providence we owe this happy opportunity in peace for the means of establishing our future national felicity. And have we now forgotten that powerful Friend, or do we imagine that we no longer need his assistance? I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of men."

No leaders of thought are so sensitive to the tone of the intellectual atmosphere of their time as the truly great poets. If we take counsel of the poets of the last half century, the men who tower aloft in the literature of the world, we will see that they stand with one accord by the more excellent way and bow with humblest reverence before the God of the Bible as they twine their most loving wreath of poesy about the brow of Jesus Christ. Hear Lowell. Surely Mr. Ingersoll will admit that not only as a poet, but as a prose writer and a prominent citizen of noble thought, he was a leader. He closes his splendid song of "The Oak" with this expression of his faith:

"Lord, all thy works are lessons; each contains
Some emblem of man's all-containing soul;
Shall he make fruitless all thy glorious pains,
Delving within thy grace an eyeless mole?
Make me the least of thy Dodona-grove,
Cause me some message of thy truth to bring,
Speak but a word through me, nor let thy love
Among my boughs disdain to perch and sing."

What a contrast to the sneering attitude of the lecturer are these words of the poet-statesman:

"I, that still pray at morning and at eve,
Loving those roots that feed us from the past,
And prizing more than Plato things I learned
At the best academy, a mother's knee."

Looking through a great European cathedral Lowell exclaims:

"Let us be thankful when, as I do here,
We can read Bethel on a pile of stones,
And seeing where God *has* been, trust in him."

How far superior to the blind materialism of Ingersoll is this sublime utterance of Lowell, written for a Fourth of July occasion:

"God of our fathers, thou who wast,
Art, and shalt be when those eye-wise who flout
Thy secret presence shall be lost
In the great light that dazzles them to doubt;
We, sprung from loins of stalwart men,
Whose strength was in their trust
That thou wouldst make thy dwelling in their dust
And walk with them a fellow-citizen
Who build a city of the just;
We, who believe life's bases rest
Beyond the probe of chemic test,
Still, like our fathers, feel thee near,
Sure that while lasts the immutable decree
The land to human nature dear
Shall not be unbeloved of thee."

It is with the same result that we turn to Oliver Wendell Holmes, the gifted "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table." Here was a man of education infinitely superior to Mr. Ingersoll's, himself a scientist as well as a poet and a philosopher. How refreshing to turn from the godless path in which the infidel would lead us and sing, with Holmes:

"O Love divine, that stooped to share
Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear!
On thee we cast each earth-born care;
We smile at pain while thou art near.

"Though long the weary way we tread,
And sorrow crown each lingering year,
No path we shun, no darkness dread,
Our hearts still whispering, 'Thou art near!'

"When drooping pleasure turns to grief,
And trembling faith is changed to fear,
The murmuring wind, the quivering leaf,
Shall softly tell us, 'Thou art near!'

"On thee we fling our burdening woe,
O, Love divine, forever dear,
Content to suffer while we know,
Living and dying, thou art near!"

After listening to this avowed "know-nothing" in religion, and his cheap scoff at God's providential care, how grand seem the words of Emerson, the revered sage of Concord:

"Revere the Maker; fetch thine eye
Up to his style and manners of the sky,
Not of adamant and gold
Built he heaven, dark and cold;
No, but a nest of bending reeds,
Flowering grass and scented weeds;

Or like a traveler's fleeing tent,
Or bow above the tempest bent;
Built of tears and sacred flames,
And virtue reaching to its aims;
Built of furtherance and pursuing,
Not of spent deeds, but of doing.
Silent rushes the swift Lord
Through ruined systems still restored,
Broadsowing, bleak and void to bless,
Plants with worlds the wilderness;
Waters with tears of ancient sorrow
Apples of Eden ripe to-morrow.
House and tenant go to ground,
Lost in God, in Godhead found."

Then there is John Greenleaf Whittier, a mighty force for liberty and freedom. How inspiring to listen to his optimistic Christian faith:

"The world sits at the feet of Christ,
Unknowing, blind, and unconsoled;
It yet shall touch his garment's fold,
And feel the heavenly Alchemist
Transform its very dust to gold."

Men inflated by their own pride, intoxicated, as Mr. Ingersoll is, with their own self-sufficiency, cannot see the beauties in Jesus Christ; but great natures like the old Quaker poet find the way into the secret of his presence, and can sing with him:

"O hearts of love! O souls that turn
Like sunflowers to the pure and best!
To you the truth is manifest:
For they the mind of Christ discern
Who lean like John upon his breast!"

Because Mr. Ingersoll has no knowledge of God he very illogically and unreasonably denies that any-

one else can have any knowledge—as though his ignorance were an assurance of the ignorance of other people. How can he put his lack of knowledge against this clear testimony of Whittier to his own Christian consciousness:

"O Joy supreme! I know the voice,
Like none beside on earth or sea;
Yea, more, O soul of mine, rejoice,
By all that he requires of me,
I know that God himself must be.

"No picture to my aid I call,
I shape no image in my prayer;
I only know in him is all
Of life, light, beauty everywhere,
Eternal goodness here and there!

"I know he is, and what he is
Whose one great purpose is the good
Of all. I rest my soul on his
Immortal love and fatherhood;
And trust him as his children should.

"I fear no more. The clouded face
Of nature smiles; through all her things
Of time and space and sense I trace
The moving of the Spirit's wings,
And hear the song of hope she sings."

Ingersoll's advice to put away all thoughts of God and the supernatural, and to eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die, finds its rebuke in the words of Longfellow's "Psalm of Life:"

"Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul."

And in this concluding verse of "The Castle-Builder:"

> "Build on, and make thy castles high and fair,
> Rising and reaching upward to the skies;
> Listen to voices in the upper air,
> Nor lose thy simple faith in mysteries."

If we go over the sea and listen to that great poet-philosopher, Robert Browning, we hear him uttering the words of reverent trust:

> "My own hope is, a sun will pierce
> The thickest cloud earth ever stretched,
> That after last returns the first;
> That which began best can't end worst,
> Nor what God blest once prove accurst."

And this other confident exhortation:

> "Grow old along with me!
> The best is yet to be,
> The last of life, for which the first was made:
>
> "Our times are in his hand
> Who saith, 'A whole I planned.'
> Youth shows but half; trust God; see all nor
> be afraid."

And if we pause beside Elizabeth Barrett Browning, his noble wife, and a no less famous poet than himself, we hear her sweet prayer:

> "Speak low to me, my Saviour, low and sweet
> From out the hallelujahs, sweet and low,
> Lest I should fear and fall, and miss thee so
> Who art not missed by any that entreat."

If we go on and talk with Wordsworth we shall hear him bearing testimony to that aching void in the human heart that none but God can fill:

"I was only then
Contented, when with bliss ineffable
I felt the sentiment of being spread
O'er all that moves and all that seemeth still;
O'er all that, lost beyond the reach of thought
And human knowledge, to the human eye
Invisible, yet liveth to the heart."

Or if we take counsel of Alfred Tennyson we shall see how he spurns this blind materialism,

"Not only cunning casts in clay:
Let science prove we are,"

he sings:

"And then
What matters science unto men,
At least to me? I would not stay.

"Let him, the wiser man who springs
Hereafter, up from childhood shape
His action like the greater ape,
But I was *born* to other things."

No poet of modern times has given more earnest reverence to the glorious Christ:

"Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand,
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be!"

Mr. Ingersoll has a great deal to say about his hatred of "the narrow way," and it is too narrow for some things. Paul tells us, in the fifth chapter of Galatians, that it is too narrow for "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, . . . hatred, . . . wrath, . . . envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings," and other things of that sort; but, thank God, the narrow way is broad enough for "love, joy,

peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," and all who love them and are controlled by them, to walk abreast.

Mr. Ingersoll concludes his address by comparing the world to an orange tree and every human life to an orange, and advises his auditors to squeeze all the juice out of the orange, so that when death comes there is nothing left but the dry and worthless peeling. Contrast that estimate of life and its close with the magnificent words of St. Paul: "For we know that, if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Or compare this estimate of life's close to the sweet and tender expressions of Christ in his farewell to his disciples: "In my Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Or compare it to the martyrdom of Stephen, who in the midst of the roaring tumult about him in his last hour had a face that shone like an angel's. And while his enemies gnashed upon him with their teeth in the bitterness of their hatred, "he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." And as they stoned him he cried out, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had

said this, he fell asleep." To a man like that life is no orange peeling that has been squeezed dry. It is a divine gift of God, to be used for noble ends, to increase in value as the years go on, and grow richer as it nears the skies. In the name of the Master I invite you, every one, to enter upon this "still more excellent way."

XIX.

The Inner Light.

"No man, when he hath lighted a lamp, putteth it in a cellar, neither under the bushel, but on the stand, that they which enter in may see the light. The lamp of thy body is thine eye: when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when it is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Look therefore whether the light that is in thee be not darkness. If therefore thy whole body be full of light, having no part dark, it shall be wholly full of light, as when the lamp with its bright shining doth give thee light."—Luke xi, 33-36. (Revised Version.)

LIGHT is a synonym of all that is beautiful and glorious in the universe of God, whether in the material or the spiritual realm. Perhaps the most magnificent declaration ever uttered by man was that recorded in the Book of Genesis: "God said, Let there be light; and there was light." Light is the most perfect emblem of purity which we can imagine, for we cannot conceive of the possibility of its defilement. Its properties bid defiance to all corrupting and impure things. No dismal swamp or fever-laden valley or fetid atmosphere can leave the slightest taint on its pure beams. It is the source of beauty. There could be no beauty without it. The colors of the rainbow, the endlessly varied and pleasing pictures portrayed before us in the flowers, the ever-changing shades in sky or forest, the delicate tints in the plumage of the bird, the flush of health on the human cheek, the glory of the sunrise, the splendor of the sunset—all these and ten thousand other manifestations of beauty are creatures of the light.

Light is the free gift of God. All the wealth of the gold fields could not purchase an added moment's sunshine on any single day. Light is the source of fruitfulness. The life and beauty of the world never could have come to pass without light. The flowers bloom, the trees wave their branches, the grass carpets the earth, the flocks and herds cover the hillsides, the fields of grain glisten in the sun, the birds form themselves into choirs, and mankind develops and prospers and goes forth with courage to occupy the earth and possess it in the lands of light. Speedily would it be the corpse of a world without light. Light is the swift-winged car which conveys heat from the central furnace of the universe by which all fertility and life is sustained and beautified.

The religion of Jesus Christ is the religion of light. One of the most splendid descriptions of our heavenly Father is in the words of John, "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." St. James says that "Every good gift and every perfect boon is from above, coming down from the father of lights;" and Jesus declares that those who seek to do the will of God are "the sons of the light." Our Saviour never said a more splendid thing about himself than when he uttered that sublime declaration, "I am the light of the world." Everywhere in the Scriptures light is used as an emblem of the righteous character of those who are the true children of God. It is also used to express the gladness and the certain hope which shall be the inspiration and reward of such a character. The psalmist says, "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for

the upright in heart;" and again it is confidently declared, "Unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness." And the blessed promise is made to all those who walk the way of faithfulness that even though they draw near to the valley of the shadow of death they shall not be surrounded by darkness, for "at evening time it shall be light." Again the word says, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Let us now consider the inner light of the conscience as it is strengthened and made perfect by the word of God and the presence of the Holy Spirit. God has put his light in our hearts. The Scriptures declare that man is "the candle of the Lord." Our souls are all illuminated more or less by the heavenly shining. No man or woman anywhere in the world has been left entirely in the dark. The conscience shining more or less brightly is, though it sometimes seems only like the smoking flax, a light from heaven in every human soul. But conscience is not a perfect guide, therefore God has given us his word, and the Holy Comforter is sent to all hearts that will receive him to enlighten our minds and to reveal the word of God to our hearts. It is not enough that we shall be conscientious, but it is required of us that we shall bring to the education of our consciences the word of God and the aid of the Holy Spirit. Many very wrong and evil things that have brought, and do bring, great sorrow and disaster to the world have been done in the past, and are being done to-day, by conscientious people.

Several years ago, at Mr. Moody's Northfield meetings, Dr. H. Clay Trumbull, the well-known Editor of the *Sunday School Times*, delivered a very discriminating discourse on "Moral Color-blindness," in which he called attention by way of illustration to the great importance in our day of this matter of "color-blindness," especially in its bearing upon the efficiency of railroad men. It has been found by means of careful investigation that from two to three hundred persons in every one thousand are unable to distinguish clearly one color from another. This becomes, of course, a life-and-death matter in the handling of railway trains. Inasmuch as the danger signal on railroad tracks is a red light, an engineer or a switchman who could not clearly distinguish between red and white or green would be likely at any time to send a trainload of passengers to destruction. And the perils from color-blindness are largely increased by the fact that those afflicted with it are often not aware of it and count their eyesight as clear as anybody's. Of recent years the great railroad companies test the vision of their employees by the aid of skilled oculists, with the result that from ten to twenty-five per cent of those who apply for positions as engineers and signalmen are found to be deficient in color-judging.

This is certainly a very pertinent illustration of the Scriptures we are here studying. As the managers of railroads are heeding the cry of the newspapers and the people, "Beware of color-blindness!" and are determined to be sure that the men who guide their trains shall know the difference between red and yellow, the warning of Christ comes to every

one of us, "Look therefore whether the light that is in thee be not darkness!"

There could be no more important question than this. It is certainly a terrible thing to be self-deceived. Yet Jesus himself says that there are some people who shall come up in the day of judgment, that last awful day of destiny, and shall ask that the doors of heaven be opened unto them, pleading in their own behalf that they have even been prophets of the name of Christ and in his name have cast out evil spirits, to whom the tender-hearted but righteous Christ will be compelled to say, "I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." We want to be sure that our conscience is in harmony with the commandments of God's word.

"If a color-blind engine driver mistakes a red signal for a white one at an open drawbridge, the resulting calamity is as terrible to the trainload of passengers as if he had deliberately defied a token of danger which he read correctly. If one violates the civil law unconsciously, he is not exempt from legal penalties because of his false sense of security. If a man has bought stolen goods without knowing it, their real owner can reclaim those goods at the holder's cost. If there is a flaw in the title of a man's homestead, the home dweller can be driven from that home mercilessly. No matter what he paid for it; no matter how much he is attached to it; no matter how necessary it is to the comfort or the safety of himself or of his family—if his title is not sound he must leave it; he must go out, it may be, into the cold world, unsheltered and homeless.

His color-blindness in reading the title does not make the false title a true one." Isaiah declares that that which is true in the material world is also true in the spiritual world. How deep and impressive are his terrible words: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!"

It is very clearly suggested in the text that, after having our minds and hearts illuminated by a conscience which is instructed by the word of God and clarified by the Holy Spirit, something may come in to interfere with the light and turn it into darkness. And what is here suggested is certainly verified by history and observation. It is worth our while to note some of the things that bring about this sad eclipse of the soul. It may be safely held that anything that corrupts or degrades or debauches the soul, anything that mars its innocence or robs it of its purity, will at the same time darken its counsels and dull the keenness of its perception as to what is right and what is wrong. Innocence is often compared to cleanness or whiteness, and on the other hand guilt is described by the words "dark" and "black" and "mire" and "dirt." Conscience is like a glass through which the light streams, but if you will rub coal dust or smut of any sort over the glass the light will shine through it but dimly, and if you cover the glass with a sufficient coat of filth it will not shine through at all, any more than it would through a piece of iron. So

sin makes foul the glass of the soul. Where the light shines clearly and the man has no doubt at all about what is right, if he yield to temptation and sinful thoughts make conquest of him, it will be as though pitch stained the glass in your window; and if he continue to sin, and impure thoughts come to get possession of the soul, the light from heaven will finally be shut out entirely. The Philistines would never have been able to put out Samson's eyes had he not first yielded to the sinful embrace of Delilah, who put out the inner eye of his conscience; when by his sins the inner light had been shut out, it was not long before he lost the other also. When God sent his angels to Sodom to lead Lot and his family out from under the doom which overhung that wicked city, and the mob gathered round the house determined to do violence to the strangers, the messengers of God smote the Sodomites with blindness; but their own lust and wickedness had already changed the light of their souls into darkness, and that was the cause of the outer blindness which fell upon them. Herod would never have stained his hands with the murder of John the Baptist had he not first debauched his conscience in his life of sin with the wicked Herodias. As Dr. South says, "Having broken through the seventh commandment, the sixth stood too near it to be safe long."

We have illustrations on every hand. Who does not know of some man who had a clear head and good business abilities, whose judgment in business, in politics, or on any question relating to the practical affairs of life, was trustworthy and valuable;

but as he gave himself over to some sin, like the sin of drunkenness, and as the sin came to have mastery over him and he was debauched by it, he lost his clearness of mind, his keenness of wit was gone, his judgment was unbalanced, and he no longer was regarded as a safe counselor in any matter of importance? How true to our modern experience are the words of Solomon: "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath complaining? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes?" And how truly he answers the question: "They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek out mixed wine." And we do not wonder at the earnestness of the exhortation which follows: "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its color in the cup, when it goeth down smoothly: at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange things, and thine heart shall utter froward things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not hurt; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again." And why will he seek it again when he arises out of his drunken slumber? Why will he seek it, though his head aches and his soul is full of loathing, and his wife's heart breaks, and his children hide their heads in shame? The answer is simple. He will seek it again because the sin which has corrupted and debauched his heart has at the same time darkened his mind and changed the inner light into darkness.

But there are other things besides those sins which besot and debauch the soul that destroy the inner light and change the light of heaven within us into darkness. That is a very significant and teaching illustration which Jesus uses in our text: "The lamp of thy body is thine eye: when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness." It is possible for the soul to be bribed so that a man cannot judge impartially and righteously. In Deuteronomy we have the record of the qualifications which Moses required of a judge. One of these was that he should not "take a gift." The reason which he gives for this is that a gift "blinds the eyes of the wise." When Samuel was challenging his enemies to bring anything against him, he asks: "Of whose hands have I received a bribe to blind my eyes therewith?" Many a soul is bribed by the greed of money. The Bible declares that "the love of money is the root of all evil." It is not the money itself which is the root of all evil, but the love of it. A man who is greedy of gain sees double. He cannot distinguish clearly in questions of honesty. He is not an impartial judge when he sees an opportunity to get his hands on gold. To such a man material things assume an altogether false proportion, and he is ready to exchange spiritual wealth of infinite value for treasures that are transitory and soon pass away. Jesus sets this forth very clearly in the parable of the rich farmer whose fields brought forth so plentifully that he said, "I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow all my corn and my

goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Few people indeed escape this sort of temptation; though most people are poor, yet the devil bribes the poor as well as the rich by the promise of material blessings at the cost of spiritual poverty. Jesus, who was tempted at all points like as we are, met this temptation squarely when, in the wilderness, the devil took him to the mountain-top and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them and said, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." But Christ, who was the light of the world, whose eye was single, whose whole body was full of light, exclaimed without a moment's hesitation, "Get thee hence, Satan, for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." The devil left him then, and he will flee away from you if you shall resist him with the same single-eyed devotion.

Sometimes the soul is bribed and the light within us is changed into darkness through greed of applause or power. This is going at us from the top instead of from the bottom, as in the other case. Greed of gain darkens our light by taking us down into the cellar of our natures and making us grovel in the earth and dig like moles for yellow dirt. Greed of applause and power takes us up to the pinnacle of the temple and destroys our light and

unbalances our judgment of what is right by making us dizzy and confused. "Pride goeth before a fall," we are told. It is true, because the proud man becomes giddy at his height and is no longer true in his moral vision. Solomon says again, "Seest thou a man that is wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him." That is evidently true, for if a man has but little wisdom, and is conscious of it, he may ask wisdom of God, who giveth to all men liberally without upbraiding. Such a man, in his weakness, being led by the divine light, may walk in safety, for the light from heaven makes the way so plain that if a man's heart is right, though he be a wayfaring man and a fool, he need not err in the path. But if a man is wise in his own conceits then he will be indifferent to the light from heaven; he will shut his eyes to the warnings of Scripture, the light that is within him will be changed into darkness, and great will be that darkness.

But, thank God, we are not left in darkness as to how we may keep the light which is in us and make sure that our whole body shall be full of light. Jesus said, "Walk while ye have the light, that darkness overtake you not." And still again, "While ye have the light, believe on the light, that ye may become sons of light." And John, who got so near the heart of Christ, says, "This is the message which we have heard from him, and announce unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he

is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin." This surely suggests to us very clearly how we may keep the light of heaven shining brightly in our hearts and minds. We are to walk in the light. We are not to sit down in it in indolence and expect that without any exertion on our part the light of joy and peace and truth will always illuminate our souls; but we are to "walk in the light." We are to seek day by day to live according to the commandments of God, and in living an obedient life we shall have light. The psalmist said, "The entrance of thy word giveth light. For the commandment is a lamp, and the law is a light." We must walk in the light of God's countenance: "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance." We are to walk in the light of the Holy Spirit: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." We are to walk in fellowship with Jesus Christ, who says, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." God help us to live worthy of our great inheritance! The apostle says, "But ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness. . . . For ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of the light."

But some one says, "I am a poor sinner. It is all dark to me. I have sinned against God and against my conscience. I have sinned against my mother's prayers. I have sinned against the knowledge of the

words of Christ. I am in the darkness and I do not see the way out." Thank God, I can show you the way! Jesus says, for the benefit of one just in your condition, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me may not abide in the darkness." That "whosoever" includes you, and, in whatever spot of darkness you may dwell, Jesus comes, "the light of the world," for you, to shed in your heart the glory of God which shines in his face. Turn your face, I pray you, toward the light in humble faith!

XX.

The Treasures of Memory.

"I call to remembrance my song in the night."—Psalm lxxvii, 6.

MEMORY is the conservative power of the soul. It has two marvelous faculties; it can both retain and reproduce the experiences of life. It can call back to the mature man the little world of his childhood and surround him again with the scenes of his boyish days. The old family house in which he was born may long since have been torn down by the stranger who has purchased the old homestead, but memory is superior to all such difficulties and can easily reconstruct the beloved dwelling and bring back father and mother, brothers and sisters, from foreign lands, or from their graves, and fill the old rooms again with their presence. Memory can make them talk and laugh and weep and pray as they used to do. The old paths through the fields and across the pasture land where he once wandered may long since have been overgrown, but memory opens them up again as of yore. And the meadows are dotted with the flowers of the springtime and here and there crimsoned with the wild strawberries, as when he was a lad. In the language of Wordsworth it is memory—

> "That throws back our life,
> And almost makes remotest infancy
> A visible scene on which the sun is shining."

Or as Young exclaims:

"What wealth in memory's fond record,
Which, should it perish, could this world recall,
In colors fresh—originally bright—
From the dark shadows of o'erwhelming years."

John Dryden, rejoicing in the consciousness of memory's rich granary, boasts—

"The joys I have possess'd are ever mine;
Out of thy reach, behind eternity,
Hid in the sacred treasure of the past,
But bless'd remembrance brings thee hourly back."

But while memory has this marvelous power to preserve present pleasures and carry them onward through the years, it has also the power to treasure up deeds of evil that make of memory's garner only a battery of pain. Lord Byron, whose own memory was a nest of scorpions, bears this warning testimony:

"Slight withal may be the things which bring
Back on the heart the weight which it would fling
Aside forever; it may be a sound—
A tone of music—summer's eve—or spring—
A flower—the wind—the ocean—which shall wound,
Striking the electric chain wherewith we're darkly bound;
And how and why we know not, nor can trace
Home to its cloud this lightning of the mind,
But feel the shock renew'd, nor can efface
The blight and black'ning which it leaves behind."

But it is our own fault if our memories become instruments of torture. The Bible declares that hell was prepared, not for man, but for "the devil and his angels." The human being who forces his

way there goes not by the decree of God, but as an invader because of his own sin. So that prophecy of hell, an evil memory inhabited with ghosts of unforgiven sins, is brought upon its possessor through his own willful iniquity. A wholesome memory is always a source of joy and comfort. That is a strong picture of Alexander Smith's in which he makes painful memories the symptom of hidden mental disease. He says:

> "Oft an unhappy thought,
> Telling all is not well, falls from his soul
> Like a diseasèd feather from the wing
> Of a sick eagle."

The eagle, well and strong, with clear eye, buoyant pinion, courageous soul, gazing into the face of the sun, and spurning the mountains beneath its wings, is a worthy figure of the normal, wholesome, mental, and moral nature of man. And what could be a more appropriate picture of a wicked soul, losing its hope and courage, and trailing behind its unhappy memories, than the diseased feathers falling from the wing of a "sick eagle?"

One of the clearest and sweetest utterances concerning memory, recently expressed, is by Algernon Charles Swinburne, who has many sins to answer for, but many excellences as well. In his poem, "The Tale of Balen," is this marvelously beautiful couplet:

> "From choral earth and quiring air
> Rang memories winged with song."

There can be no doubt that the divine Love, who created us in his own likeness and image, and en-

dowed us with memory, intended it for our blessing and comfort. And if our lives are lived purely in accordance with his will we shall have many "memories winged with song."

It is a very suggestive touch in the psalmist that in the time of his great sorrow, when his spirit was overwhelmed, he sought to comfort himself by calling to remembrance "his song in the night." When present joy seemed impossible he sought to comfort his soul, to refresh his hope, and renew his courage and strength by recalling the songs which God had given him in other times of trial. Quaint old John Trapp, commenting on this utterance of the psalmist, says that David was "glad, in this scarcity of comfort, to live upon the old store, as bees do in winter." Such a thought about memory would certainly add a great deal to the gladness of childhood, the pleasures of youth, and the joyous consciousness of strength and delight in the expression of it in younger manhood and womanhood. It certainly would make sweeter present happiness to feel that we had it, not for the present alone, but for the future as well; that old age was to be sweetened and enriched by the treasures which memory carries of songs that have long since died on the ear. A proper appreciation of the fact that whatever music is stored in memory's phonograph must be listened to over and over again would make us careful concerning the tunes to which we give heed to-day.

Let us notice some of the memories which have sweet music for us in times of despondency and trial. There is a class of memories for whose

possession one can never be grateful enough; they come to us, not because of any merit of our own, but as an inheritance—the memories of the goodness of parents and of childhood's relatives and friends. Paul, in his second letter to Timothy, says, "I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee." That was a shrewd home thrust of Paul's by which he was sure to stir up Timothy to do his very best. There is no greater lever to move a really honorable and noble mind to high ambition and lofty aspiration than to recall memories of noble parents who watched over childhood with prayers and songs of faith and loving sacrifice, hoping most of all for the young life that it should be ever pure and good. I have known of scores of young men who had wandered away from God, had fallen into evil ways, whose hearts had become indifferent and hardened until the early hope of a righteous life and the simple and sweet faith of childhood in God and Christ and immortality was fast perishing out of the heart, to be brought back again out of this slough of wickedness and despair by some word or experience that awoke memories of father's or mother's piety and faith expressed in the days when they were little children. Better than an inheritance of houses and lands, of flocks and herds, or gold and silver, are the treasures of memory which an honest Christian man or a gentle-hearted, prayerful woman may bequeath to their chil-

dren by training them up in an atmosphere made fragrant by reverent study of God's word and unaffected, natural worship. The child that inherits its confidence in God and purity by living in the midst of a loving Christian life in those early impressionable days has a storehouse of inexhaustible treasure.

Another memory which is very helpful and precious in times of trial is the memory of tried and true friends. Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, says in the opening of that communication, "I thank God upon every remembrance of you." What a great source of joy it is to us to have stored up in the treasure house of our hearts memories of people who have been so loyal and faithful to us, and whose affection and sympathy have been such overflowing fountains of comfort, that we thank God whenever we recall them. People who go through the world without making friends make a great mistake. And it is not true to say that the power to make friends is a matter of temperament. It is possible to overcome all adverse conditions, and by being ourselves friendly at heart, taking an interest in other people, being unselfish in our desire for their happiness, to insure their friendship for us. He who by self-denial and kindness has won the fidelity and sympathy of a loyal heart has made the best earthly investment one can make. Its dividends will be more comforting and precious than will ever be returned from railroad stocks or government bonds.

The memory of an act of self-denial for another's peace or comfort, even though it be to a stranger or

an enemy, will always be a memory that will give comfort and satisfaction. It seems pleasant at the time to have our own way about everything, and if we have it we go carelessly on thinking we have been successful. Yet when the present has become the past, and we look back over the experiences of life to find something to give us comfort and pleasure, it is never those places where we rode roughshod over everybody and had our own way, no matter what the result to others, that we recall to our peace. But if there was a time when for the sake of a great cause or a true principle we denied ourselves, and suffered in ease or purse or reputation for the truth's sake, and endured days and weeks and perhaps years of hardship, memory goes back to that place as bees hie themselves to a field of flowers and finds the sweetest honey of consolation.

If there was a time when, for the sake of those who were weak or sick or old or poor, we put aside the pleasure we longed for, bore their burdens, soothed their sorrows, and gave them days and nights of care and sympathy—often lonely times, monotonous and dull—strange it is that not to the joyous years but to these dull and heavy times of burden bearing memory goes back to gather her bouquets of comfort.

An act of forgiveness of a wrong done to us is a deed the memory of which will ever be a source of comfort. At the time when we have been insulted, and some one has used us despitefully and so bitterly wronged us that forgiveness on our part seems almost an indication of weakness and a lack of self-

respect, the devil tempts us to believe that to stand on our dignity and assert ourselves, to show that we cannot be scorned with impunity, is the proper spirit for us to exhibit and will contribute most to our satisfaction and peace. But he was a liar from the beginning, and none of his delusions and snares are worse than this. Beforehand, when we are thinking about an enemy, we picture ourselves as making him blanch before our biting sarcasm and bitter epithets, and the hot eloquence which we utter between our teeth in advance seems very fine indeed. But after it is gone, and we have said the most crushing thing that we could conceive of, how utterly silly and cruel and painful it is to recall. It is the "soft answer" that "turneth away wrath" that comforts us to meditate on after it has been spoken, and as the years go on its memory grows sweeter. To be able to recall in after years that in a time of great emergency, when we were misjudged and misunderstood and wronged without reason, we were able in the strength of the Master to follow his example who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, but who even on the cross prayed with inexpressible tenderness for his enemies, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," is to insure a memory that will be a source of comfort and consolation to us in the most trying hours of human experience.

Memories of God's providential guidance and his interposition in our behalf in times of need are always great sources of comfort. How clearly this shines out in the psalm from which we get our text! The path over which a faithful soul travels to com-

fort is very clearly marked out here as we follow David's track through the storm. This was the course he took when his soul refused to be comforted:

"I call to remembrance my song in the night:
I commune with mine own heart;
And my spirit made diligent search.
Will the Lord cast off forever?
And will he be favorable no more?
Is his mercy clean gone forever?
Doth his promise fail for evermore?
Hath God forgotten to be gracious?
Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?
And I said, This is my infirmity;
But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.
I make mention of the deeds of the Lord;
For I will remember thy wonders of old.
I will meditate also upon all thy work,
And muse on thy doings.
Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary:
Who is a great god like unto God?
Thou art the God that doest wonders:
Thou hast made known thy strength among the peoples."

How many of us carry in our memories incidents of God's providential care so marked in their testimony to his thoughtfulness and love concerning us that is impossible for any cloud to be dark enough to make us despair when memories of them are recalled!

The memories of God's promises can never fail to give us comfort and to awake hope and courage in our hearts. When the women went to the sepulcher on the first Easter morning and found the stone rolled away from the tomb, and when they had

gone down into the tomb and found it empty, the angels who appeared to them inquired, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying that the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again." And Luke adds this suggestive sentence, "They remembered his words." How much comfort and assurance that memory must have brought them as they stood there beside that open grave! The words of the Saviour are for our comfort, and we should treasure them up in our memories, so that we shall have an arsenal of defense in time of temptation and abundant remedy against discouragement in every time of sorrow and trial.

I do not dare to conclude without a word of hope and comfort to any whose memories are treasure houses of evil deeds and unholy thoughts, and who long for deliverance, and yet have no power to escape from the evil memory which enslaves them. Earth has no physician skillful enough to

> "Minister to a mind diseased,
> Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
> Raze out the written troubles of the brain
> And with some sweet, oblivious antidote
> Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
> Which weighs upon the heart."

But while earth has no physician great enough to accomplish the needed cure, Jesus Christ, the great Physician, is able to take even the bitter sting out of an evil memory, to sweeten the conscience, to purify the heart, and make the fountain of life clean again.

XXI.

The Pathos of American Patriotism.

"And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people."—Ezra iii, 11-13.

THERE is something picturesque and suggestive in the contrast of emotions portrayed in the picture outlined in this Scripture. The long captivity is over, and the people have come back, those that are still alive, with permission to rebuild the temple of their hope and love. At last the great day comes for laying the foundation. With instrumental music and songs they arrange to celebrate the occasion. To the younger people it is a time of unmixed gladness and exaltation. They see in it only a promise of peace and a pledge of hope for the future. The old temple may have been beautiful and glorious, but the new, still more splendid, is soon to satisfy their admiring gaze and reecho their songs of worship. But in the midst of this exaltation and joy are some of the old men, who remember the glory of the earlier temple. Their memories go back to the days before war had devastated their city and their land; before the invader had carried away the flower of their people captive to far-off Babylon. They recall the many loved ones whose

precious dust rests beside the willows on which they hung their harps in a strange land. And though they, too, rejoice in the prospect of the rebuilding of the temple, yet the occasion stirs within their hearts the deep fountains of tears; and though no one doubts that their patriotism is as true and loyal as the others, yet there is a touch of pathos in their devotion that the younger people do not and cannot know.

Our annual observation of Memorial Day affords a scene very much like that. The boys and girls that were born in 1866, after the close of the war, are now thirty-one years old. A new generation has grown up since the hero of Appomattox said to his fallen but noble foe, "Let us have peace!" To this young generation there are in these occasions in a large measure only the flowers of joy and peace and victory. It means to them the laying year by year a new stone in the wall of the growing temple of our great republic. But the fathers remember the days before the long and desperate struggle; they recall the shock of the shot against Fort Sumter, the call for volunteers, the hurrying, forming ranks of men, the deserted stores and farms, the brave but tearful women, the lonely waiting and watching at home, the hardships of camp and field, the bloody barbarism of battle, the heart-breaking loneliness of hospital and prison; and to those whose memories are filled with pictures like these, Memorial Day has a depth of pathos about it of which others can know little. The old veteran of the Grand Army who, no longer able to march with his comrades, watches in his chair at the window or

leans upon his cane or crutch on the doorstep, recalls the day when these gray-haired and feeble men who tramp past him now were young and strong in the glow of their youth. He sees them again marching to the cars to take their way to the front, and on to meet the enemy. Scarcely more than boys they were then, athletic and active in their movements, hair brown or black, cheeks flushed with health, ready to go to their death as they would go to a ball game. When the old veteran thinks of the first picture and then of this, it is not that he is disloyal that the tears run down his cheeks—he would do it all over again, God knows—but the old flag waving yonder at the head of the column has had for him a baptism of tears and blood. There is about his loyalty to it and his love for it a pathos that his son or his grandson have not yet learned.

It is good for us now and then to stop our boasting and, roused from our selfish complacency, to remember how much the flag, with its untorn folds and its ever-adding stars, has cost in treasure and blood.

Mrs. J. K. Barney tells a touching story of a certain town where there was a struggling little village in which every home had sent its representative to the army of the Union—a father, husband, son, or brother. This town was famous for sending out boxes of good things for the sick and wounded soldiers. One day the lady who usually had charge of these boxes drove with another lady through the village to gather the materials to pack one of these army boxes. As they came to an old tumble-

down farmhouse on a hillside the lady who was driving said to her friend, a stranger in the community, "The woman living there has given more than any of us."

"How so?" was the response. "I should not judge by the appearance of the place that she would have so much to give."

"Well, she was left a widow with three sons, and she brought them up carefully, and when the war began they all wanted to go, but we neighbors said one of them must stay at home. They looked into her face for their permission, and they got it. She sent them forth with her blessing, bidding them remember their mother's God. One died on the battlefield, one is starving in a Southern prison, and one is stationed at the very frontier. She has also given when we have sent supplies until one is ashamed to ask anything more of her, and yet it would not do to pass her by. You will see she has something ready. Come in."

As they entered they saw seated by the kitchen stove a poor old woman whose hands and limbs were all drawn out of shape by rheumatism. The ladies made known their errand, and then the widow moved about collecting her gifts, while the poor old woman by the stove began to cry.

"Have you any friends in the war?" the ladies asked.

"No, I have not any friends; I am a poor old pauper, boarded here by the town. I don't belong to anybody, and nobody belongs to me, and I haven't anything to give to the war;" and again she groaned aloud.

They tried to comfort her by saying, "Well, you can pray, you know."

She gave an earnest look into their faces as she replied, "Yes, but don't you know if your prayers mean anything they make you want to do something?"

Then, after a pause, she cried, "I have got something," and getting up with her crutches she hobbled away.

Coming back she dropped a brown paper bag into the lap of one of the ladies as she said, "God bless all a poor pauper has to give!" then added, "it's only a bunch of pennyroyal. I picked it last summer and dried it good; if you don't send it don't tell me, for I would like to think it went."

"O, we'll send it," was the reply, "and we will write something on it, and perhaps you will hear from it again."

The box was sent and reached its destination on a day of great emergency. Hurriedly the parcels were opened, then the papers were put back in the box and the box shoved away in the corner. Had God forgotten the brown paper bag and its contents? God never forgets. Months afterward there came to that little village a letter telling of a terrible battle, where men laid for hours uncared for, and where the wounded were brought into the improvised hospital and laid in rows upon the floor, while men shaking with fever and ague were laid down on the other side. "In my desperation," said the nurse, "I pulled out the box and tossed over the papers. How I longed for something to give the boys a hot drink! My eyes fell on the brown paper

bag with the writing on it. In five minutes I had a fire, and in ten more the aroma of that pennyroyal tea filled the room.

"Many of the boys were from the country, and they began to sniff. 'What's that?'

"'What you got there, nurse?'

"'I shouldn't think you would need to ask what that is,' said one; 'I've cut that many a time for my wife to give to the babies.'

"'I used to take it when I was a baby,' said another young fellow. Poor lad, it had not been long since he was a baby, either.

"'Shut up,' cried one lonesome fellow; 'don't talk about home and babies; I sha'n't ever see mine again.'"

Then a clear, sweet voice began singing: "Home, home, sweet, sweet home."

It went on; other voices joined in, and when they ceased one poor man said, "Boys, my feet are in the river. Can't you tide me over? Sing it through again."

They sang it again. Then other songs followed, tender and helpful, while the nurse served out her tea. When silence fell upon them they found seven men had been "tided over," and scores had been soothed to sleep by the hot drink and the comforting influences of the hour.

The nurse wrote to the lady who had sent the box, "Tell the poor old pauper of her offering and its blessed use." So the ride was taken, but when they reached the old tumble-down house on the hillside there was a vacant place beside the stove. She had been dead some weeks and the town had

buried her. She had come into possession of her royal heritage and had exchanged her pauper rags for the robe of the King's daughters; and if she needed to hear the story, the Master himself could proclaim, as he did of another woman who had not much to give, "She hath done what she could."

No thoughtful man can notice the thinning ranks of the veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic without deep tenderness. The poet appropriately expresses it:

"Thin grow the ranks! A few worn, weary men,
With the white spray of age upon each brow,
Come in sad memory of those far-off days
When they marched gayly where they falter now.

"A few are left! how short has grown the list!
We call it tenderly with bated breath,
Lest from our ranks should fade the noble band
To answer to the roll-call of the ruler, Death.

"Few, few are left! the ranks grow thin, and wide
Apart as the dim armies of the past;
Silent and slow they come, who once
Their conquering forces on the foeman cast.

"Only a few, with weak and faltering tread,
And for a little while their march they keep
O'er the rough ways of poverty and age
To bivouac grounds of rest, so green and deep,

"Thin grow the ranks! In silent camps they wait,
Who shared those hours of victory or defeat;
And marble sentries guard the sacred spot
Where war-worn heroes rest in slumber sweet.

"So few are left! Where are those gallant ones
Who led the conquering band to victory,
Who out of darkness brought the light of peace
And set a race of suffering people free?

"So few, but ah! the golden-fruited years
Have scattered memory blossoms on their way;
And a glad nation comes with thankful heart
To tell its love on Decoration Day."

It is also a great joy and a matter for universal thanksgiving that the bitterness between the sections is dying out and the arts of peace uniting in fellowship and interest all parts of the republic. When the Grand Army of the Republic met in Louisville, Ky., in 1895, Henry Watterson, speaking words of welcome, said, "It is with a kind of exultation that I fling open the gates of this gateway to the South. I bid you welcome in the name of the people whose voice is the voice of God. You came and we resisted you; you come and we greet you; for times change and men change with them. You will find here scarcely a sign of the battle, not a reminiscence of its passions. Grim-visaged war has smoothed his wrinkled front; and whichever way you turn on either side . . . you shall encounter as you pass those moldering heaps which remind you of your valor and travail only the magnanimous spirit of dead heroes, with Grant and Sherman and Thomas and McPherson and Logan looking down from the happy stars, as if repeating the words of the Master, 'Charity for all; malice toward none.'

"We, too, have our graves; we, too, had our heroes! all, all are comrades now upon the other side, where you and I must shortly join them. Blessed, thrice blessed we who have lived to see fulfilled the psalmist's prophecy of peace:

"'Peace in our quiet dales,
Made rankly fertile by the blood of men;
Peace in the woodland and the lonely glen,
Peace in the peopled vales.

"'Peace in the crowded town;
Peace in a thousand fields of waving grain;
Peace in the highway and the flowery lane;
Peace o'er the wind-swept down.

"'Peace in the whirring marts;
Peace where the scholar thinks, the hunter roams;
Peace, God of peace, peace, peace in all our homes,
And all our hearts!'"

In the mingled pathos and exultation of Memorial Day there ought to be kindled in our hearts a patriotism of that high and noble kind which gives sympathy with liberty's struggle throughout the world. When the immortal Kossuth made his famous visit to America, pleading for his own land, he delivered a great address in Boston in Faneuil Hall. In the midst of his eloquent discourse he exclaimed, "'Cradle of American Liberty!' It is a great name, but there is something in it which saddens my heart. You should not say 'American liberty.' You should say, 'Liberty in America.' Liberty should not be either American or European. It should be just 'liberty.' God is God. He is neither America's God nor Europe's God; he is God. So should liberty be." We ought to rise up to the level of that appeal. American patriotism ought to be of the type that has a loving heart and a helping hand for the oppressed of every land under heaven. In Armenia tens of thousands of people have met their death, and other thousands wander home-

less and in terror, because they sought liberty to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences. The land that gave us the Bible, the charter of our laws and our liberties, is being depopulated under the eyes of Christian Europe and America. Many thousands of men and women and children have been shot and tortured and outraged out of life, while multitudes of others suffer a living death in the hands of their cruel captors. It must ever be to our shame that in an emergency like this our White Squadron lay idle and our flag had no one to interpret its meaning to that tyrant Turk whom England's greatest poet living has aptly and appropriately termed "Abdul, the damned!"

In the time of horror in Armenia, when statesmen and rulers in Europe and America seemed palsied and helpless, the one glorious figure in the dark picture was our own American heroine, Clara Barton. She gave the flower of her youth to nurse the wounded and dying soldiers of the Union, and then she gave the sweet "Hazel Blossoms" of her autumn days to outraged Armenia.

Just now from our Southern gate the Cubans are making a heroic struggle against a tyranny and oppression tenfold more severe and bitter than that which stirred the blood of our Revolutionary ancestors to throw off the government of King George. It is almost impossible of belief that this American republic, standing here in its giant strength, the trustee of liberty and civilization on the Western continent, shall remain idly watching in selfish indifference while a brave and heroic people are savagely butchered and exterminated from the land

that gave them birth. A nation, like an individual, is responsible to humanity for its wealth and its power. The United States cannot avoid the responsibility of its position. We owe it to ourselves and to the human race to put a stop to the bloody tyranny of Spain in the island of Cuba. It is the duty of America to stand as the guarantee for freedom in the Western world. God grant that we shall be true to our trust!

XXII

The Stumbler's Guardian.

"For in many things we all stumble."—James iii, 2. (Revised Version.)

"Now unto him who is able to guard you from stumbling."—Jude 24. (Revised Version.)

WE are all stumblers—not all in the same way, not all over the same obstacles, but the Scripture is true when it declares that not only in occasional things, but "in many things, we all stumble." Those who congratulate themselves most on their stability and even on the superiority of their spiritual exaltation may be stumbling at the very moment over their self-righteousness or religious vanity.

The story is told of a man who stood up in an experience meeting and said, "I have been for five years on the Mount of Transfiguration."

"How many souls have you led to Christ in that time?" inquired the pastor.

"Well, I don't know," he replied.

"Have you brought a single one?"

"I don't know that I have."

"Well, then, you had better come down."

When a man gets too high for service he may be sure there is something wrong. Peter wanted to stay on the Mount of Transfiguration and set up the tents there for a long camp, but Christ took him down into the valley, to a hand-to-hand fight with devils who were tormenting poor, sinful men. So

long as we are in this world we shall have reason to regard ourselves as stumblers at the best, and will be most fittingly clothed with the spirit of humility.

Indeed, pride is one of the greatest stumbling-blocks known to our human life. Jeremiah, speaking to the Church of his day, said: "Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud: for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains; and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness. But if ye will not hear it," cried the earnest prophet, "my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride." And again the Lord, speaking through the mouth of the same prophet, says: "Because my people have forgotten me, they have burned incense to vanity, and they have caused them to stumble in their ways from the ancient paths." Whenever a man comes to burn incense to his own vanity you may expect to see him stumble headlong into shame and disaster. He was a wise man who said, "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him."

Benjamin Franklin tells how when a young man he visited the venerable Dr. Cotton Mather, of Boston. At the close of the interview the doctor showed him out of the house by a back way. As they passed along a narrow passage he said to young Franklin, "Stoop! *Stoop!*" The boy did not immediately comprehend his advice, and took another step, which brought his head rather violently against a beam that projected over the passage. "My lad," said Dr. Mather, "you are young and the world is be-

fore you; learn to stoop as you go through it, and you will save yourself many a hard thump."

Another stumbling-block is a too high appreciation of the importance of worldly possessions. God has put us into a world of abundance, and it is natural and right that we should desire to have not only a sufficiency of the good things of the physical world to supply our needs, but something in store as a reserve fund to draw upon. But when we get greedy of physical goods and, setting our hearts upon them, imagine that in some way they make us independent of God's providential care and render us able to get along without him, they become a stumbling-block over which many stumble into disaster and ruin.

The prophet Ezekiel voices the message of God to his people who had become purse-proud, and tells them of a time of siege and famine that should come upon them, when "they shall cast their silver in the streets, and their gold shall be removed: their silver and their gold shall not be able to deliver them in the day of the wrath of the Lord: they shall not satisfy their souls, neither fill their bowels, because it is the stumbling-block of their iniquity." Wealth is like a horse: if it be well broken to harness and mastered and controlled by a wise driver it is a good servant, but if it takes the bit in its teeth and goes uncontrolled it is an engine of destruction.

An uncontrolled tongue is also pointed out in the Scriptures as a dangerous cause of stumbling. James, from whom we get our first text, discourses at length in regard to the perils of the tongue. It would be a good thing if we would all commit to

memory the entire paragraph: "For in many things we all stumble. If any stumbleth not in word, the same is a perfect man, able to bridle the whole body also. Now if we put the horses' bridles into their mouths, that they may obey us, we turn about their whole body also. Behold, the ships also, though they are so great, and are driven by rough winds, are yet turned about by a very small rudder, whither the impulse of the steersman willeth. So the tongue also is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how much wood is kindled by how small a fire! And the tongue is a fire: the world of iniquity among our members is the tongue, which defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the wheel of nature, and is set on fire by hell. For every kind of beasts and birds, of creeping things and things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed by mankind: but the tongue can no man tame; it is a restless evil, it is full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we the Lord and Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the likeness of God: out of the same mouth cometh forth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth the fountain send forth from the same opening sweet water and bitter? can a fig tree, my brethren, yield olives, or a vine figs? neither can salt water yield sweet."

Socrates tells the story of a plain and ignorant but very devout man who came to one who was learned and asked that he would teach him one of the Psalms. The teacher chose the thirty-ninth Psalm, which begins: "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue." The pupil was so impressed with that sentence that he

closed the book and said he would go and learn to practice that, and would afterward return and learn further. After many months had passed away he was asked why he did not go on with the learning of the Psalm. His reply was that he had not yet mastered that verse, and the same reply he continued to make for more than forty years. He had not yet learned fully to control his own tongue. How many there are who stumble at this point!

But perhaps the greatest stumbling-block is that of doubt and uncertainty. The doubter is always a stumbler. Paul says in Corinthians, "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block." And yet to all who accepted the cross of Christ in humility and faith it was "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." Again, in his letter to the Romans, Paul says, "But Israel, following after a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by works. They stumbled at the stone of stumbling; even as it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense: and he that believeth on him shall not be put to shame."

He who walks by the clear light of faith pursues his pilgrimage with steady footsteps. The doubting, worldly-minded Lot stumbled into the quagmires of Sodom; but the faithful Abraham found a clear path and good company even in the desert. The Christian who keeps his eyes firmly fixed on the great certainties of the Bible may walk the way of life without stumbling. Thank God, there are such certainties! It is refreshing to open the First Epistle

of John and hear him talk about the things he knew and the things which it is possible for us to know. What a victorious shout is this: "We know that whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not; but he that was begotten of God keepeth him, and the evil one toucheth him not. We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the evil one. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ." It was an exultant testimony like that that shook the old Roman world to pieces and gave the early Christians their great triumph. Their mighty power was in the things they knew. They did not go out proclaiming their theories, but shouting the certainty of their salvation from their sins. Unbelief then, as now, was bringing forth its deadly fruits of debauchery, despair, and suicide. Into the midst of the dying religions of their day these followers of Christ came with their glorious Gospel of immortality and eternal hope. People who heard them, seeing the flash of confidence in their eyes and noting the pathos and conviction in their tones as well as the courage and self-sacrifice of their conduct, believed them, and became themselves soldiers of the Christ.

One of the saddest features of the present age is the multitude of men who march under the banner of Christ and yet preach a gospel so vague and uncertain, and so given up to a discussion of unimportant theories, that the people stumble in doubt and uncertainty into the ditch of despair. It would be a good thing to-day if many preachers could hear

the message which the old Scotch woman gave to Dr. Norman MacLeod when he came to his first parish. The wise old woman told him to "gang ower the fundamentals." The great fundamentals need to be emphasized again and again until every doubting heart shall be inspired with good cheer by the divine certainties of Christianity. The present age in our church life and study has been given up far too much to curious boring into the mechanical construction of the Bible and to taking it to pieces to see how it was made. Better a thousand times to devote our energy to preaching its sublime truths for which the multitudes are starving and perishing. There has been a great outcry against vivisection when applied to rabbits or frogs or dogs, but there has been going on a far more important spiritual vivisection. Some men have been so busy opening the veins of the Bible to see how it was put together that they have become reckless and heedless of the fact that the life-blood has been escaping from the faith of the people, and many are stumbling into hopelessness and despair. No man is going to cure the heartache and cleanse the sins of the doubting multitude by a gospel of negation or speculation. No man ever brought conviction in his fellow-man unless conviction has first cleansed his own heart with live fire from the altar of God. Nobody ever believes a stumbling, halting witness, who does not more than half believe his own story. Enthusiasm is born of certainty. Pathos comes to the voice and pity to the eyes only when there is a glowing heart behind them. Frozen hearts can never pour out streams of loving invitation.

We are living in an age peculiarily given to social investigation and reform. A great deal has been done, and vastly more remains to be done in that way, but we greatly stumble when we speak of such movements as substitutes for Christianity and the Church. The social reform movements of our day are only the blossom of Christianity and get all their exuberant and fragrant life from its great vital root. The one hope of our stumbling humanity is in Jesus Christ. As Jude puts it, "Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore." If we give our hearts to him and yield ourselves to his guidance he will guard us from stumbling. If any one asks how to give his heart to Christ, I would say that it is like giving one's heart in human sympathy and affection to a friend.

Mr. Crockett, the novelist, the author of *The Stickit Minister*, tells a wonderfully human story of the gift of the heart which is very true to life. Cleg Kelley was a street boy of Edinburgh. He had no home, and had a drunken, good-for-nothing thief for a father. He possessed a marvelous fund of cunning developed in self-defense under exposure to the oppression and wickedness of the slums. He was a reckless, plucky, shrewd little dare-devil expert in all the wickedness of his class. A young lady teaching in a mission school came into contact with Cleg Kelley. He with his band of little social outlaws

set himself to get fun by making her life miserable. But with the patience that endureth all things, because born of Christian love, she devoted herself to these boys until at last she made a conquest of Cleg. He changed suddenly from being the worst boy in the school, who had caused her the most trouble, to be her friend. From that day he showed a wonderful attachment to her, and gave her the most knightly devotion. He was a different boy because love had awakened in him. There was nothing too hard for him to do for his teacher. He set himself up as her protector, and any one who troubled her became at once his enemy. That was a real change of heart, and any one who will put himself to school to the Lord Jesus Christ, and come to know him, will have a like change of heart. No one can earnestly study the life of Jesus without ceasing to be indifferent to him. Like the author of *Ben Hur*, they will come to love him as their Saviour. In that abiding love of Christ is the stumbler's sure refuge.

A long excursion train crowded full of passengers was once coming over the Alleghany Mountains on the way east. The train had passed the summit and was rapidly descending on this side when suddenly the steam whistle screamed as if in agony: "Put on the brakes! put on the brakes!" Up pressed the brakes, but with no apparent slackening of the cars on the steep grade. The passengers thrust their heads out of the windows in alarm to see what was the trouble. This was what caused the warning cry of the steam: Just as the engine began to turn on a curve the engineer saw a little girl and her baby brother playing on the track. In

a moment the cars would be on them. The shriek of the whistle startled the little girl, and every passenger looking out of the window could see them. Close to the track, in the upright wall, was a little niche out of which a piece of rock had been blasted. In an instant the baby had been thrust into this niche, and as the cars came thundering by the passengers, holding their breath, heard the clear voice of the little sister ring out, "Cling close to the rock, Johnny! cling close to the rock!" And the little fellow snuggled in and put his head as close to the corner of the rock as possible, while the heavy cars whirred past him. Many were the tear-wet eyes that gazed at the little baby nestling in the cleft of the rock, and many a fervent thanksgiving went up to heaven. There was on that train an old man who was coming East with his son. The boy was coming to an eastern city to live, while his aged father was to return back to his home. A few hours after this incident on the mountain, when the father was saying good-bye, there crowded into his mind and heart the temptations that would beset the path of his child, and as he clasped his hand in farewell he choked, the tears filled his eyes, and he could only repeat the little girl's words which were still fresh in his memory, "Cling close to the Rock, my son! cling close to the Rock!"

In that cleft Rock is your hope and mine. Let us sing with Dr. Striker:

"When the sky is bright above me,
When around all seem to love me,
When no fear or troubles move me,
Then I'll trust in God.

"He's the source of all my pleasure;
He, from out his richest treasure,
Gives me, without stint or measure,
Bliss at home, abroad.

"When the day is dark and eerie,
When my feet are worn and weary,
When my heart is sad and dreary,
Then I'll trust in God.

"He it is who kindly leads me,
He who daily clothes and feeds me,
And I know whate'er my needs be
He will help afford.

"On the mount or in the valley,
On the highway, lane, or alley,
I will still my courage rally,
Singing, 'Trust in God.'

"He's my all; I want no other;
Jesus is my elder Brother;
Tender as a loving mother,
Is my blessed Lord."

XXIII.

How Some People Slander the Devil.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man: but each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is full-grown, bringeth forth death."—James i, 12-15. (Revised Version.)

FROM the very first days of the recorded story of mankind men and women have been trying to place the guilt of their sins on somebody else. When Adam was arrested in the Garden of Eden, hiding from God with the new consciousness of shame because of his nakedness, he said, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." And when Eve was called to account, with the searching inquiry, "What is this thou hast done?" her reply was ready at the tip of her tongue, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." People have been talking that way ever since. A traveler in Venezuela tells a suggestive story illustrating this disposition to lay our sins on something else instead of ourselves. A hard drinker came home one night in such a condition that he could not for some time find his hammock, where he was accustomed to sleep. After he had found it he tried in vain to get off his big riding boots. After many fruitless efforts he lay down in his hammock and soliloquized aloud, "Well, I have

traveled all the world over; I lived five years in Cuba, four in Jamaica, five in Brazil; I have traveled through Spain and Portugal and been in Africa, but I never yet was in such an abominable country as this where a man is obliged to go to bed with his boots on." It never occurred to the miserable wretch that his drunken habits had anything to do with it.

Many scapegoats are used by those who try to shirk their individual responsibility for their sins, but I shall mention only two. A very common occurrence is for the sinner to blame the God who created him. A man breaks the law of God and then says by way of apology, "He made me so, and I cannot help myself." But the clear-headed, brave man who penned our text declares that there is no foundation for such an excuse. "Let no man," says James, "say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man."

But, says one, I surely have a valid excuse, for I have inherited such marked tendencies to certain evil ways that I live under constant temptations to sin in a way that most other people know nothing of. My answer is that our reason and will and conscience are all given us to fight against any evil tendencies which we may inherit, and that the very essence of our manhood and womanhood is in our power to resist evil and be master of our own natures.

I knew a man who inherited from his ancestors a thirst for strong drink. He came from a race of drunkards. Among his first conscious appetites was

a longing for intoxicating stimulants. Through all his boyhood and young manhood, and on through middle life, he never saw the bottles in a saloon window, or heard the glasses clink as he passed on the sidewalk, but that fiendish thirst within him was aroused. From the first day of accountability until now it has been one long steady fight against that inherited tendency to evil. He is over sixty years old now and he has never soiled his lips with a single glass of strong drink. Fighting the devil of lust in his most terrible form, he has, by the help of Jesus Christ, kept his manhood clean and pure and wholesome, and will take it unstained before the judgment seat.

Our wills are given to us for this very purpose—to be rulers of our own nature. There is a vast difference between wanting to do right and *willing* to do right.

Kate Upson Clark relates the story of a larger boy, who was scolding a smaller one, at the close of a summer vacation, because a certain task remained unaccomplished.

"You promised your mother," said this youthful mentor, with all the severity of a judge, "that you would study your arithmetic at least fifteen minutes a day, and you haven't studied ten minutes all summer. You've had lots of time. Why didn't you do it?"

The little boy shuffled his feet and looked miserable. At last he whined, "I ain't had such an awful lot of time as you think. I wanted to get along in my 'rithmetic 's much as she wanted me to."

"You wanted to!" sniffed the older boy contemptuously.

"Yes, I did want to."

"You might as well not have wanted to. You didn't want to enough!"

There is an irresistible logic about that boy's statement. Unless we are going to "want to enough," we might as well not want to at all. What we want to do enough we do. Our human life is something more than a picnic. Its temptations and struggles are not to be settled by sentimental day dreams. We must understand that it is war, and that to the finish, between our wills and everything that stands in the way of a genuine Christian life. We cannot dally with sinful desires, we must slay them. Any spirit in us that is rebellious to God we must conquer at once. We need to treat any such inclination as Bismarck's doctor treated him. In a life of Prince Bismarck published not long since there is an anecdote which relates how Dr. Schweninger became the chancellor's private physician, and subjugated the great man to his will. The doctor, on being introduced to Bismarck's household, on the illness of the Chancellor, recognized the strong temperament with which he had to deal, and resolved to assume the whip-hand at the very outset. The doctor forbade his patient to partake of a certain dish of which he was particularly fond. Bismarck rebelled and had it placed before him notwithstanding. Hearing of what had been done Dr. Schweninger entered the room, took the dish forcibly from the patient's hands, and flung it out of the open window.

The man of iron perceived that he had met his match, and was ever afterward the most docile of patients under Dr. Schweninger's hands. The fierce passions and appetites with which many have to contend must be met and conquered in that spirit. We are to be soldiers of Christ, and the great preliminary battles are to be fought out on the battle-ground of our own souls. If we are faithful there, many an unexpected ally will come to our aid. An English officer who is a Christian, speaking in a meeting in London the other day about Christian life in the army, said that a Christian soldier must be an out-and-out follower of Christ in the barrack room. There must be no laxity or half-heartedness, no kneeling to pray with only one knee bent, or else a comrade would call out, "Two knees on the ground there!" The officer declared that a real Christian soldier was always respected by his comrades. A man in his regiment was converted, and at night knelt down by his cot to pray. In the same company was a noted bully, the terror of the regiment. As soon as the soldier knelt some one threw a boot at him. Then the bully strode over to where the kneeling soldier was and called out at the top of his voice, "If any of ye want to practice shying boots, shy them at me!" The man who masters his own nature will find many forces fighting for him.

If we were only machines we would not need this struggle; but because we are men and women, the children of the Highest, it is in such struggle that we develop the character that is most worth having. When a certain king asked Ole Bull, the great vio-

linist, where he caught the rapturous tones which he brought out of his instrument, the musician replied, "I caught them, your majesty, from the mountains of Norway." He had climbed, said Dr. George Douglass, the rugged mountains and listened to the music of the awful storms; he had waited on the lowlier cliffs and heard the evening vespers of the pines at the time of the sunset breeze; he had heard the midnight litany of the cascades in the darkness. When he interpreted these voices of nature he thrilled the world's great heart. It is the same kind of thing which has given some men power beyond others to inspire humanity. It is because they have ascended the mountains and gone down into the valleys of sorrow, and there caught up the tones of tenderness and of subdued strength and confidence, that they have had a message of victory for their race. The burden-bearers and helpers of the ages are the people who have been tempted, who have suffered, who have been broken-hearted, who have gained the victory over themselves and become thereby able to help others. Count them over in every walk of life, and you will prove the truth of what I say. Luther, Wesley, Bunyan, Lincoln, all saviors in their way because, like the Christ, they had wrestled with temptation, suffered the agony of heart-break, trodden self under foot, and come off victorious.

No, indeed, we cannot lay the responsibility of our sins on God or on the nature which he has given us. If our human nature is a bad servant and has come to be a tyrant, it is because we have spoiled it. Neither can we heap our sins upon the

already overloaded back of the devil, as Eve undertook to do so long ago. It is always safe to slander the devil, because, no matter how many slaves he has about, he has no friends. Old Peter Mackenzie, a distinguished Wesleyan, who died recently, used to say in his lecture on the devil, "Why, the very name of the devil is bad. No one likes to hear it. Take the 'd' away and it is 'evil;' take the 'e' away and it is 'vile;' take the 'v' away and it is 'il;' take the 'i' away and it leaves that bad place that nobody wants to go to."

But however cunning and wily the devil may be to tempt us, he has no power to force us to do evil. He tried it thoroughly with Job and failed. He robbed him of his property, of his family, and of his health, and yet Job said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." He tried it with Jesus in the wilderness and in the city, from the mountain-top and from the pinnacle of the temple, and met the scathing rebuke, "Get thee behind me, Satan!" It is not possible for us to be put in any place where we are compelled to surrender to the devil. The word of God plainly declares that if we resist the devil he will flee from us. When we yield our fortress to him it is because there is treachery in our own camp. It used to be a favorite plan among the Indians in the early border warfare with the settlers to manage to get a hitherto friendly old squaw, or a half-breed Indian supposed to be trustworthy, smuggled into the fort of the whites, and then, in the stillness of the night, these treacherous spies would creep stealthily to the door or gate and let in the lurking foe upon the sleeping garrison. It is in like manner

that human hearts are captured by the devil. He is powerless to do us harm unless there be a traitor within ourselves.

How, then, does sin come about? Human language could not state it more clearly than does James in our text: "Each man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is full-grown, bringeth forth death." The word "lust" here does not stand for any particular vice, but undoubtedly relates to the spirit of rebellion and tendency to evil of any kind which lurks in the unclean human heart. And this, the apostle declares, is the real tempter of the soul. A corrupt imagination sets before the mind and heart a picture of sin in which only the pleasure and fascination and glitter of iniquity is displayed. The other side of sin—its trouble, its remorse, its disaster, its shame and ruin—all this is hidden. If the mind permits itself to feast upon this enticing and delusive picture it is lost. But if the will and the reason turn the picture about and look upon the other side the soul revolts against it and is saved.

See the process of temptation in the case of Eve. One tree in the garden was forbidden. She watched that tree and wished it were not tabooed. Then the serpent came with his lies about wisdom and about becoming like the gods if one ate of the fruit of this tree. Then she looked again on the forbidden fruit, and as she looked on it she longed for it. Then she took it and fondled it, and then she ate of it and gave to her husband. In that hour of fascination righteousness seemed hard and sin seemed easy.

To her willful imagination only the bright side was displayed—the attractive fruit, wisdom, and glory. But, alas! she soon found there was another side to the picture. How dark the colors are there! Stroke after stroke, the divine Artist paints them in. Fear, shame, hiding, outcast, the flaming sword, her firstborn son a murderer and a vagabond, her own noble boy the victim of assassination—that is the awful other side of the picture.

But the sin was Eve's. It was not necessary for her to surrender to the devil. Every day men and women are put in exactly similar positions and come off victorious. An editor relates how a newspaper man in New York city said to him not long ago: "I was obliged to resign my position in the editorial office where I was settled, not that I was disappointed financially, but I was afraid to stay. When I went there I had a little moral code of my own where my work was concerned, and I honestly believe the editors had theirs; but they had gradually become so confused in comparative ethics as to lose the power of discrimination. The worst of it was, their reasoning was so plausible. You see, they had first to persuade their own uneasy consciences on all doubtful points; and when I came along with my remonstrances there were the most subtle arguments filed and ready for use on me. I was losing grip on my convictions every day. The only escape for me was to turn and run, as I have." That man was a general who saved his army by retreat, as many another general has before him. But such a retreat is equal to a victory.

It is impossible to close this solemn discussion

without a glimpse at the awful final tragedy to which our text points with no uncertain finger. Sin may begin in the glamour of a diseased imagination and appear very attractive and fascinating, but when it is "full-grown," to use the suggestive figure of James, it always means death. The only one who can rescue the soul that has been captured by the evil one, and, cleansing it from sin, illuminate it with the light of hope, is Jesus Christ. The literature, of the race is full of the confession that there is no human power able to cleanse the guilty heart and wash away the stains of sin. Edgar Allan Poe, the meteoric genius of our literature, bears his testimony to the tenacity of sin in his greatest poem, "The Raven." One shudders as he watches the raven sitting on the bust of Pallas and listens to the plea of the remorseful sinner,

"Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore!"

And one's heart aches as the despairing soul inquires of that "bird of memory perched there on the head of reason:"

"Tell me truly, I implore—
Is there—is there balm in Gilead? Tell me—tell me—I implore!"

But the wretched poet who had yielded his heart to be a den of unclean things caught no glimpse of the great Physician of souls, and in despair answers his own question:

"And the raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,
And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;

And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the
floor
Shall be lifted—nevermore."

But, thank God, it need not be so with you. Jesus has power to take that cruel raven's beak of remorse out of your heart, and with the light of his forgiving mercy chase away that soul-benumbing shadow and give you peace.

XXIV.

Childhood the Standard of Value in Christ's Kingdom.

"In that hour came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And he called to him a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. xviii, 1–3. (Revised Version.)

OUR nation has had a heated political discussion as to what the proper standard of value in the financial world. There is undoubtedly a vast amount of honest difference of opinion as to what is the wise course for our government to pursue in the monetary war between gold and silver. But in the spiritual realm the followers of Jesus Christ have no room left for difference of opinion as to what is the standard of value. When his disciples were debating the question as to who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, Christ put before them a little child and declared that the condition of entrance into the spiritual kingdom was the casting out of pride and the humbling one's self to the spirit of a child.

It would be easy to devote all our time to a discussion of the value of humility, and to show that humility is at the beginning of all wisdom and power. A child is unconsciously humble, and unaffected humility bowing in reverence before the laws of God is the only condition upon which nature has yielded her mysterious forces to the control of man. In the spirit-

ual world, also, all blessings are hinged upon our humility. The greatest and wisest, as well as the poorest and most ignorant, must humbly accept eternal life as the gift of God through Jesus Christ. But I desire to notice some other characteristics of childhood which make it properly the standard of value in the kingdom of Christ.

1. In the first place, childhood is confiding. Faith and trust are as natural to a child as the breath of air which fills its lungs. Everything about it is mysterious. It understands nothing, but it trusts, and in its confidence is secure. I have seen a story of a little child which was caught up by a Western cyclone and carried for several miles, as it were, in the arms of the storm and finally laid down gently on an overturned stack of hay unharmed. The storm that carried it through the night tore great buildings to pieces, uprooted trees, and devastated farms; but the little babe, caught up in the heart of the storm, was rocked in the midst of it as gently as ever a mother rocked a cradle.

The great secret of Christian living is to be born a second time into that spirit of childlike confidence and trust in the care of God. Men and women who have entered into that second childhood find the "heart of the storm," and, finding it, find peace and rest. The freedom from worry and care in a wholesome, healthy childhood is proverbial. When we accept the heavenly invitation and cast all our cares on Jesus we stop the growing wrinkles on our foreheads, smooth the anxious expression out of our faces, and expel the bitter worry from our hearts. These human machines of ours are

made to endure a large amount of work, and my observation is that very few people work themselves to death, but anxiety and worry prey upon the vital forces of life like a cancer. The cure is to enter upon the new childhood of the heavenly kingdom.

Hannah Whitall Smith says she knew a lady who had a very oppressive temporal burden. It took away her sleep and her appetite, and there was danger of her health breaking down under it. One day, when it seemed especially heavy, she noticed lying on the table near her a little tract, called *Hannah's Faith.* Attracted by the title, she picked it up and began to read it. The story was of a poor woman who was carried triumphant through a life of unusual sorrow. She was giving the history of her life to a kind visitor on one occasion, and at the close the visitor said, feelingly:

"O, Hannah, I do not see how you could bear so much sorrow!"

"I did not bear it," was the quick reply; "the Lord bore it for me."

"Yes," said the visitor, "that is the right way. We must take our troubles to the Lord."

"Yes," replied Hannah, "but we must do more than that; we must leave them there. Most people," she continued, "take their burdens to him, but they bring them away with them again, and are just as worried and unhappy as ever. But I take mine and I leave them with him, and I come away and forget them. If the worry comes back I take it to him again; and I do this over and over until at last I just forget I have any worries, and am at perfect rest."

2. Childhood is whole-hearted and genuine in its enthusiasm. Perhaps there is no sadder loss which comes to some people as they get older than the loss of that whole-hearted intensity which is our natural human inheritance. A young man said not long ago to the Editor of the *Outlook:* "I have had a much better education than my father had, and I am sure I mean as well by the world. But I have not the ring of his moral nature; I cannot strike such blows as he struck, because the things I am doing do not seem so important to me as they seemed to him. My convictions are not so deep, nor are they so fixed." That was a very manly but exceedingly pathetic confession. The editor to whom it is made well says that a man can do nothing greatly who does not put his whole heart into the work. "The artist who is not quite persuaded that his art is worth the best that is in him may do some brilliant things, but he will never do the immortal things; the man who is in doubt about the authority and value of his moral standards and ideals may be pure and honest and loving, but he will never pour himself like a healing stream into the arid places of the world." We may see in this the reason why so many people who were of little force in the world prior to their conversion have suddenly, on becoming genuine Christians, developed an intellectual and moral energy that no one knew they possessed. All unknown to themselves the nobler possibilities were lying sluggish and dormant until the new birth into spiritual childhood aroused and concentrated the forces of the soul to labor for the upbuilding of Christ's kingdom.

3. Childhood lives in the present and future, and makes very little of the ills and defeats of the past. And if we are to become great in the kingdom of heaven, we must follow Paul's childlike example and forget the failures that are behind and press forward toward the victories that are to be won. One of the poorest things one ever does in this world is to sit down despondingly and look back on the sorrows and defeats that are behind, and meditate upon them as though we were really afraid we might forget them and have some peace. Dr. Brooke Herford wittily says that some people date everything from their "black-letter days." When they want to identify some past time, it is, "the week before I broke my leg;" or, "that winter when all the children were down with the measles;" or, "the year after we had that great loss in business." If Lot's wife had managed to get away she would always have dated everything from the time when the family was burned out in Sodom.

The story is related of Tennyson that he once consulted an eminent Scotch surgeon about some affection of the lungs, and some years afterward went to him a second time on the same errand. On being announced, the great poet was nettled to observe that the surgeon did not only not remember his face, but did not even recognize his name. He mentioned his former visit. Still the surgeon failed to recall him. Then the surgeon put his ear to the patient's chest. "Ah," said he, "I remember you now; I know you by your lung." He knew nothing about the author of "In Memoriam," but he remembered perfectly the peculiar sound of that ailing lung.

There was some excuse for the doctor, for it was his business to have a sensitive ear to the defects of people. But there is no excuse for us when we shut our eyes and ears to the beautiful sights and sounds and harmonies of the universe and let all the sweet music of life go for nothing while we brood over our little ills and defeats. O, for childhood's hopeful spirit that refuses to be mired in yesterday's swamp, but presses forward with bounding heart toward the prize which lures us onward!

4. Childhood expresses easily and joyfully its appreciation and thanksgiving. The loss in this respect as years go on is sometimes one of the most sorrowful our human lives know. The young Christian, like the young child, speaks naturally and enthusiastically of the goodness and mercy of God in salvation. It is a sad loss when for any reason this glad testimony is silenced. The Brooklyn *Eagle* some time ago had an editorial article on the prevalence of the lockjaw plant on Long Island. It is a small plant. One requires a microscope to see it. But inoculation with it produces dreadful results. There has been a death in Brooklyn from this cause. There is a spiritual lockjaw which is also very prevalent; indeed, far more prevalent than the other kind, and very hurtful to the victim and to the Church. It ought to be as natural for us to express our appreciation of God's providential care and of his forgiving mercy to us in Jesus Christ as it is for a child to express its glad thanksgiving for the loving ministrations of father or mother.

5. There is no malice in childhood. That was a strong statement of Paul when he said to the

Corinthians, "In malice be ye babes, but in mind be men." A little child never holds a grudge. It may be aroused by a sudden sense of injustice to intense anger and grief, but it subsides as easily as it has been aroused. A child forgives with perfect naturalness and completeness. That is the spirit of Christ. It is the atmosphere of his kingdom. Nothing could be more foreign to the spirit of Christianity than the treasuring up of enmity and hatred against our fellow-beings. Christ voiced the essential spirit of his kingdom when he said, "Love your enemies, . . . do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you." And how clear does he make the distinction between the Christian standard and that of the world when he continues to illustrate the matter by saying, "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. And if ye love them that love you, what thank have ye? for even sinners love those that love them. And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for even sinners do the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? even sinners lend to sinners, to receive again as much. But love your enemies, and do them good, and lend, never despairing; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be sons of the Most High: for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil." Paul was only illustrating the same spirit when he said in the twelfth of Romans, "Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth to me; I will recompense, saith the Lord. But

if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head."

6. Childhood is simple and unaffected in its love and devotion. A gentleman residing in a Pennsylvania town had occasion to visit the city of Minneapolis. He went to see a lawyer concerning an estate. After the business was over he said, "I have something in my valise for you which comes from a boy in Pennsylvania." The inquiring face of the attorney brought out this remark: "You remember a boy who once lived in Minneapolis, who lost both parents here? Afterward he was taken to Pennsylvania to live with some friends. You were especially interested in the family."

On this explanation the lawyer remembered the case very well.

"When I came away," the visitor went on, "this boy came to me and asked:

"'Do you expect to meet Mr. S——?'

"I told him I expected to see you in your office in a few days.

"'I want you to take something to him.'

"I told him I should be glad to do so if the package was not too large. 'O, you can carry it without much trouble,' and he walked over to the foot of the hill where a number of wild flowers grew. Pulling up a bunch of them, roots and all, he said, after carefully wrapping them up in this piece of newspaper, 'I want you to ask Mr. S—— to go out to Lakewood and put half of these on my papa's grave and the other half on mamma's grave.'"

Both gentlemen were quiet for a moment when

the visitor had ceased speaking. Then the lawyer said, gently, "Will you go with me to Lakewood?" And they went out together.

The graves were plain, with no headstones, no flowers. They planted the faded wild flowers as the boy had requested. They looked about them. There were many splendid marble shafts; there were many stones of great cost all over the beautiful cemetery. But in all that city of the dead there was nothing that seemed to them so beautiful, so rare, so sweet, as the sprigs of wild flowers they planted on "mamma's" and "papa's" graves. Some of the monuments were monuments to pride; these flowers were tokens of the purest love this side of heaven.

They drove away with softened hearts and tearful eyes, believing with Paul that the greatest thing in this world is love.

Our theme will not have been in vain if it shows us the hollowness and vanity of all the world calls great and splendid when contrasted with the gentleness, the humility, the hopeful, loving trust and whole-hearted purpose of the heart of a child. God grant to each one of us such a heart!

XXV.

The Gulf Stream of Human Life.

"Behold, I make all things new."—Rev. xxi, 5.

THERE is a mighty river flowing off our coast in the midst of the Atlantic Ocean called the Gulf Stream. It emerges from the warm southern heart of the Gulf of Mexico and pushes its tides out through the Florida channel as a stream of boiling water pours through the spout of a teakettle. With strong and steady current it pursues its way northward at a rate of from forty to sixty miles a day, softening the harshness of the atmosphere and greatly modifying the climate of all our northern world. Off the coast of Newfoundland it meets the cold Labrador current coming from the desolate ice barrens of the arctic regions, bearing on its frigid bosom a great fleet of icebergs. But these mammoth ice ships soon melt away when they strike the surging current from the south.

Christianity is in the world as a gulf stream flowing from the heart of God. Wherever its tides rise and fall the icebergs of selfishness and greed melt away. The breezes that sweep over its warm currents cause the social climate to lose its frigidity and harshness. The world is coming every day to be a better place to live, human life is becoming more sacred and more worth living, because Christianity's gulf stream is fast girdling the earth and is exerci-

sing more and more a gracious influence on the soul climate of mankind.

What Christianity is to the race, it is first of all to the individual. It is the one force known to our humanity that can defy time and circumstance, and keep the hope and faith and sympathy of the human heart forever fresh and green. Fifty years after Longfellow had graduated at Bowdoin College he read a poem at the semicentennial anniversary of his class, in which he speaks of the work of old men:

> "But why, you ask me, should this tale be told
> To men grown old, or who are growing old?
> It is too late. Ah! nothing is too late
> Till the tired heart shall cease to palpitate.
> Cato learned Greek at eighty; Sophocles
> Wrote his Œdipus, and Simonides
> Bore off the prize of verse from his compeers,
> When each had numbered more than fourscore years,
> And Theophrastus, at fourscore and ten,
> Had but begun his Characters of Men.
> Chaucer, at Woodstock with the nightingale,
> At sixty wrote the Canterbury Tales;
> Goethe at Weimar, toiling to the last,
> Completed Faust, when eighty years were past.
> These are indeed exceptions; but they show
> How far the Gulf Stream of our youth may flow
> Into the arctic regions of our lives,
> Where little else than life itself survives."

It is my purpose to urge upon you that there is a gulf stream of perpetual youth which no arctic region of old age can conquer; that there is such a thing as perpetual freshness and newness produced by the flowing in the soul of that spiritual current which Jesus declares may spring up into everlasting life.

We have all in our childhood read the story of the Spanish adventurer who, having wasted his physical forces in dissipation at dissolute European courts, came over to Florida in those early days of Spanish discovery and conquest, hoping to find in that land of flowers, fragrant forests, gay-plumaged birds, and abounding springs and streams the fabled fountain of perpetual youth. How he sought after it through hardship and pain, and at last, with hope defeated, died in despair, we all remember. Alas! Ponce de Leon is only a type of multitudes in every age who hope to find in worldly pursuits and sensual, selfish triumph a fountain of perpetual vigor and joy. All such find, as Solomon found in the midst of the brilliant and dazzling career which God seems to have given him as a warning to all that should come after, that the days come to the sensualist and the worldling when the appetite loses its zest, and all the pleasures of power and riches become tasteless, and the sated and burned-out soul is ready to cry, "There is nothing new under the sun."

An old Oregonian who had made a great fortune in silver mines supposed that when he had all the money he wanted he would be able to buy perfect happiness and peace. So when he came to have more money than he knew how to spend he gladly joined in the scheme of his wife to go to the capital of the nation and make an incursion on society. A beautiful plot of land was bought in Washington, and with unlimited money at disposal, architect and builders soon produced a splendid and imposing mansion. Then began the struggle to be fashionable, in which the old Oregon prospecter had ex-

pected to find so much happiness. To his astonishment and sorrow he found in it no happiness at all. Balls and receptions bored him. Late dinners he soon found agreed neither with his head nor his stomach. He found it hard work, even to please his daughters, to pretend much interest in men who could not talk intelligently about anything except lawn tennis or the latest play. One gleam of pleasure came to the old miner when, one day, his old "partner" visited Washington. His face fell, however, when his old friend asked to see the new house. But the millionaire was too proud to shirk his duty. Wearing a face of deepest gloom, he escorted his visitor up stairs and down. The Westerner, to whom all this was new, was full of admiration and enthusiasm. The host said little or nothing. In due course the inspection was finished, and they reached the hall.

"Well, Tim," was the visitor's last word, "you can't say you haven't everything you want!"

"Yes, I can," the millionaire answered, soberly, "I want a parrot."

"A parrot! What for?"

"To hang up here, so every time I open the door it can say, 'Here comes that old fool again!'"

The Oregon millionaire was finding that Solomon knew what he was talking about when he said, "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do: and, behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was no profit under the sun."

That which can give perpetual freshness and

enjoyment to life must come from within, from the realm of the soul. Jesus Christ has the power to make all things new and keep them new because he makes the heart new and feeds it upon undecaying food. The great victory for us to win is the victory of the soul over the appetites and lusts of the flesh. When Dante began his immortal poem he tells us that there passed before his imagination a dreary wood, a dark and lonely forest, which seemed to intervene between him and the spirit world after which his best nature yearned. And as he entered this forest, seeking to reach the nobler spirit life beyond, he was met by a beautiful leopard. This leopard was intended to suggest to him the pleasures of physical beauty, a temptation to his senses, and he was tempted to yield the spiritual visions that inspired him that he might regale himself in the charms of physical beauty that were within his reach. But he gained the victory, and his great soul refused to be turned aside. Then, as he pushed his way onward through the forest, a wolf, wild and fierce, met him and threatened him. The wolf was the emblem of his fleshly appetites, a type of those ravenous lusts that draw the soul downward. But he refused this also. Then a lion stood in the path. This was the type of fame, of glory and renown. But Dante prayed to heaven and was divinely helped and aided of God. He passed the leopard, the wolf, and the lion, and finally emerged from the forest of temptation on to those lofty table-lands of the soul, into an atmosphere where was born his great poem.

Not to the poet only comes such a struggle. Every one of us must choose whether he shall live a worldly and sensual life or the life of the spirit. If we are to live a life of ever-springing hope and constant usefulness, we must have divine help and fellowship. He who makes a machine knows best how to keep it in order. I was reading some time ago of a New York manufacturer of pumps who was appealed to by a purchaser, who had set up a large pump in California, to come there and repair a defect in the machinery which the local engineer could not locate, and which baffled the skill of all who examined the plant. The Eastern manufacturer, wishing to avoid the loss of time and expense necessary for the long trip, tried the experiment of sending out a phonograph to record the noise of the pump's action, hoping that it might act as a stethoscope over the heart of the machine, and carry back to the ear of the skilled mechanic the jarring sound which would enable him to tell what was the matter. His expectation was fully realized. The throbbing, wheezing sound of the pump was faithfully reported, and the manufacturer was able to correct the trouble at once, without leaving his office chair in New York city. So he who made the soul knows how to care for it. David in the twenty-third psalm says of God, "He restoreth my soul." Christ came as a physician to seek after the sick and the hurt and the lost. And he knows how to put his ear to our throbbing, wheezing hearts and tell what is the matter and bring us remedy.

We may rest assured that abiding enthusiasm and contentment can only come from a genuinely

wholesome heart. Mrs. Mary Clemmer Hudson, writing to a friend a little before her death, said, "Though I am not old, I have sounded the deeps and shadows of all that is called society till I feel through my heart of hearts that all that is of real value is the lowly, contrite spirit, the clear mind, the loving, consecrated heart; all else is emptiness, vanity, vexation of soul. I am very happy solely because I have reached that upper ether of spiritual calm which envy, jealousy, and malice cannot reach. I do common work, plenty of it, but in a spirit of consecration which ennobles it—at least to me. . . . At the last there can be no beauty for you or me but the beauty of holiness."

The soul that has yielded itself in submission to the divine will cannot doubt God's willingness to bless, because of the witness forever springing up within itself. When old Sojourner Truth, one of the most picturesque characters of the antislavery days, was in the deepest distress because her child had been stolen and sold into slavery, she besought God to give her the money she needed to seek redress at the hands of the law. She thought within herself, "God has money," and she went as directly to him as ever a child does to a parent. Telling the story with infinite pathos she says: "I didn't rightly know which way to turn; but I went to the Lord, and I said, 'O Lord, if I was as rich as you are, and you was as poor as I be, I'd help you. You know I would; and, O, do help me!' I felt sure then that he would help me, and he did." The vein of immortal fellowship between Sojourner Truth and God is revealed in those striking words

which were the key to her prayer—"I'd help you; you know I would." She appealed to God's knowledge of her own heart as to its fidelity. There is no withering autumn of doubt or fear and no winter of discontent and despair, to the soul that can do that with confidence. The soul thus sure of the divine kindness, and forever sunning itself in the warmth and light of eternal hope, finds that old age has no power to rob it of new and rich experiences as its voyage draws near to an end on the seas of earth.

You have all heard of the hanging gardens of Babylon and the modern roof gardens, and you have perhaps read about the gardens on floating islands in which vegetables used to be grown for the citizens of ancient Mexico; but I read the other day, with a good deal of interest, in the Portland *Oregonian*, the story of a garden on board a ship, with a farmyard attachment. The splendid ship *Mowhan*, recently in port at Portland, Ore., had such an arrangement on board during her trip from Ireland to our Western coast. On leaving Belfast she took on board as ballast two thousand tons of Irish soil, which, when leveled off, made quite a stretch of ground; and the ship's company proceeded to put it to good use by planting a stock of garden truck in it. The seeds came up all right, the plants flourished finely, and, when the ship was in the tropics, grew with great rapidity. As they progressed toward Cape Horn, and the weather grew colder, things came to perfection rapidly. The crew and ship's apprentices amused themselves by weeding and cultivating the plants, and the

captain and officers took regular walks in the garden daily, and all had green vegetables to their hearts' content. As they came round the Horn the garden was replanted, and by the time they reached the equator everything was a-bloom and all hands feasted on fresh vegetables. The only drawback to the garden was the weeds, which grew so rapidly that they could hardly be kept down, and the drove of pigs which was kept in the farmyard attachment, and which on several occasions, when the ship was plunging into the teeth of a northeaster and rolling heavily, broke out of their pens and made serious inroads on the garden. The last pig was killed and served up with green vegetables just before the *Mowhan* entered the mouth of the Columbia River.

Our voyage of life ought to be like that. Life's garden should be planted and replanted again. For it is God's promise that those who submit themselves to spiritual cultivation shall bring forth fruit in old age. May the poet's vision prove true of every one of us:

"Softly, O, softly, the years have crept by thee,
Touching thee lightly with tenderest care;
Sorrow and death they have often brought nigh thee,
Yet they have left thee but beauty to wear;
Growing old gracefully,
Gracefully fair.

"Far from the storms that are lashing the ocean,
Nearer each day to the pleasant home light;
Far from the waves that are big with commotion,
Under full sail and the harbor in sight;
Growing old cheerfully,
Cheerful and bright.

"Past all the winds that were adverse and chilling,
Past all the islands that lured thee to rest;
Past all the currents that bore thee unwilling
Far from thy course to the land of the blest;
Growing old peacefully,
Peaceful and blest.

"Never a feeling of envy or sorrow
When the bright faces of children are seen;
Never a year from the young thou wouldst borrow,
Thou dost remember what lieth between;
Growing old willingly,
Thankful, serene.

"Rich in experience that angels might covet,
Rich in a faith that has grown with thy years;
Rich in a love that grew from and above it,
Soothing thy sorrows and hushing thy fears;
Growing old wealthily,
Loving and dear.

"Hearts at the sound of thy coming are lightened,
Ready and willing thy hand to relieve;
Many a face at thy kind word has brightened,
'It is more blessed to give than receive.'
Growing old happily,
Ceasing to grieve.

"Eyes that grow dim on earth and its glory
Have a sweet recompense youth cannot know;
Ears that grow dull to the earth and its story
Drink in the songs that from paradise flow.
Growing old graciously,
Purer than snow."

XXVI.

The Importance of Harnessing Our Thoughts.

"Think on these things."—Phil. iv, 8.

I THINK this is rather a startling command to the average reader who gives it attention. To many people thoughts are such unreal, fanciful things that they are not taken very seriously. There is reason to believe that there are a large number of persons who do not hold themselves soberly responsible for the character of their thoughts. A careful examination, however, will convince any one of the serious importance of one's thoughts.

This universe of which our world is a part represents what at first was only a thought of God. There was a thought of light in the mind of God, and the resultant of that thought was, "Let there be light, and there was light." He thought of a world, and the dry land appeared out of the chaos and the sea found its habitation. He thought of the firmament, and the sun took his place in the heavens to rule by day, and the moon and the stars to rule by night. There was in God's mind a thought of beauty, and the grass grew in the valleys, and trees sprang up on the hillsides, and flowers blossomed in the sun; thought of living creatures to enjoy, and the fishes swam in the sea, the birds began to fly in the air, and ten thousand insects and animals sported in vale and forest and

mountain. There was a thought of love, and man, the child of God's infinite tenderness, appeared, to be master and ruler in this world of teeming life and marvelous fertility and beauty. From the tiniest little flower or fluttering midge of a summer evening to the most splendid planet that shines upon us from the bosom of night, everything in the universe is the result of God's thought.

Not only are the thoughts of God so important that they crystallize into worlds with mountains and seas, peopled with creatures interesting and important; but the thoughts of man work marvelous revolutions and produce important material results. The steam engine is a fanciful, ethereal thought wrought out in iron and steel, trembling with the power of steam within, but heated first of all from the fires of the brain. The locomotive that pulls the long train more than sixty miles an hour is a thought materialized. The great bridge spanning the river between New York and Brooklyn existed first of all in the thought of the builder. The great dome of St. Peter's in Rome was first in the narrower dome that covered the brow of Michelangelo. All the great achievements of mankind in invention, manufactures, architecture, or art, are the result of thoughts that have been harnessed by the human will and held steadily to their noble work.

Thoughts become more important when we consider that our characters are the result of our thoughts. If you have ever visited the Luray Caverns in Virginia, or the Great Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, or any monster cavern of that sort,

your attention has been called to the enormous pillars which have been formed by the steady dropping of water from the roof of the cavern, and you have marveled at the splendid masonry of solid rock that has been formed by the slow and silent processes of nature. A single drop of water, finding its way from the surface down through the roof of the cave, deposits its sediment, and another follows it, and another, and still another, each adding its imperceptible contribution, until the icicle of stone begins to grow, and, ultimately reaching the rock beneath, becomes a massive pillar that shall stand for ten thousand years. There is a process like that going on in every one of our hearts. Each thought that stirs for a moment only our emotion, and can be compared in its apparent insignificance to a single drop of water with its limestone deposit from the roof of a cavern, sinks into the soul and all unconsciously makes its deposit. Other thoughts follow, and yet others, until a habit of thought along a given line of reasoning, arousing similar emotions, is formed, erecting within our hearts monuments of purpose or pillars of ambition that have to do with our characters forever. Thus it happens that many an individual reared in the midst of Christian society, and still retaining the outward form of religion and continuing to observe the ordinances of Christian fellowship, has by yielding the heart to the invasion of worldly thoughts permitted the soul to be built up into a fortress of worldliness with worldly tastes and desires and purposes. And yet all this has come about almost unconsciously. This is the explanation of that

strange anomaly in our modern civilization, people who count themselves nominally Christian but who have no real sympathy with the spirit of Christ, and whose controlling purpose and ambition is entirely antagonistic to the mission of Jesus among men. The heart has been lost to the enemy by yielding it to be the reveling place of worldly and selfish thoughts.

There is an old proverb that "thoughts pass toll free." And that proverb is very apt indeed where there is any attempt made to tyrannize over the human mind and imprison or restrain it from its righteous freedom; but is by no means an excuse for giving no care or attention to our thoughts, or cause for imagining that it makes no difference what kind of thoughts possess our hearts and are retained in our minds. As Mr. Frothingham has said, our thoughts, be they what they will, seem to cost nothing. While they are free from observation they are free from charge. They can neither be arrested nor taxed. They rove at full pleasure, needing no bridge, and are stopped by no gate. They pass over all bounds of actual and possible things. They spread the feast without price. They open the door into the spectacle without ticket. They take possession without leave. There glitters for them the airy wealth that no labor strove after and no care need watch, and they are surrounded at will with scenes and objects of delight that are scarcely less fading than those which a real wealth can buy. They cost us no hard looks from others, no complaints or reproaches. They involve no risk. They impose no liability.

So it seems to us often; but, alas! things are not always what they seem. Our thoughts do cost sometimes a fearful price. We have no right to exercise them according to our caprice or for our own self-indulgence. It is by no means true that they have the absolute freedom people sometimes claim for them, or that they are without expensive consequences. We are all of us under obligations to harness our thoughts down to the real duties and obligations of our lives. Instead of allowing them to run wild wherever they will, or choosing where they will go, we are under obligations to apply them to earnest tasks, to make them grapple honestly with adverse circumstances, and faithfully seek how to bear with patience the heavy cares of our daily lives. Instead of painting fanciful pictures and reveling in nonsensical dreams, our thoughts should be spent in honest exertion to fulfill our daily duties that are so often so full of perplexity and trial. Our thoughts, like our hands, must perform service, undergo discipline, and seize hold upon the duties of life with diligence and fidelity.

One must be blind to all the lessons of history not to see that, instead of being without effect, thoughts are the causes of the most important consequences; and, so far from being exempt from moral judgment, they indeed are the very first sinners, for there can hardly be any guilt where the thought has not first offended. Strange, is it not, that men and women should so quibble with their own consciences and try to deceive themselves into believing that there is no sin unless the desires for iniquity be accomplished in the outward doing,

while, as a matter of fact, the essence of all evil must be in the thought first? Our thoughts spread out and take hold of the feeling, the most sensitive part of our nature. Good thoughts cherish and confirm the good affections. Evil thoughts inflame and give intoxicating power to every wild and vagrant lust. It is our thoughts that either check violent emotions or increase their temperature. They either resist the seductions of evil or aid immeasurably the temptation that fascinates us. Devout and pure sentiments cannot grow and thrive in our hearts without meditations upon good and holy things; and the bitter and wicked passions come to dominance in the heart by pondering and meditating upon unholy purposes.

The thoughts which we give the right of way in our hearts very soon come to master the will. It is the office of our thoughts to suggest, while it is the duty of the will to execute the purpose which has been already conceived and meditated in the thought. We say deeds are the most important things in the world, and yet there was never a deed, good or bad, that did not first live in the thought. Jesus Christ, who knew perfectly the human heart, in speaking of the evil things that proceed out of an evil heart, puts *evil thoughts* at the head of the list. Mark records that he had once said to his disciples and to a large crowd of people who were with them, "There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man." Afterward, when they were alone, they asked the Master what

was the meaning of these words, and this was his answer: "Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into a man, it cannot defile him; because it entereth not into his heart. . . . That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evil things come from within, and defile the man." You notice that in this list "evil thoughts" are at the beginning, and then the Master goes on to name that awful catalogue of things which he associated with them; "blasphemy," the most evil expression that the tongue can utter; and "murders," the most villainous deeds that the violent and desperate hand can do.

In the face of that testimony of Christ's surely no one can say that his thoughts cost nothing. They cost many a man everything life holds that is worth having. How many have lost their liberty and become slaves to the most humiliating bondage through evil thoughts! With what graphic force Isaiah sets forth the importance of the character of our thoughts when, speaking of the possible salvation of the sinner, he says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts." Many a man who has undertaken to break away from his sins has found his unrighteous thoughts which first led him to sin dogging him, like a pack of deerhounds pursuing their prey, with evil suggestions and unholy pictures

that have made it impossible for him to reform, until the divine power of God has cleansed and purified his thoughts and changed the character of the imaginations of his heart.

But some one says: "I cannot help evil thoughts coming into my mind. No man can build a fence high enough around his field to keep the birds from flying over it and into it; and no matter how I set myself to think about right and pure things, evil thoughts, like vagrant birds, find their way over the fence of my purpose and annoy and trouble me." There is truth in that, and we are not responsible for vile thoughts that may come our way, if we do not welcome or harbor them. As some one has said, the best Christian hearts in this world are like Solomon's ships, which brought home from their foreign voyage not only gold and silver, but monkeys and peacocks. So our minds and hearts, while claiming for their cargo spiritual and heavenly meditations and purposes, will sometimes find on board, to our sorrow and regret, vain and foolish thoughts. We are responsible only for the way we treat these evil suggestions. If we drive them from the door and give them no welcome they will soon tire of the attempt to find an entrance. Thoughts are like guests—they will not come often if they are not wanted. We are as much responsible for the thoughts that regularly sit down at our intellectual fireside as we are for the guests who habitually come to our table and feel at home in our family circle. If we refuse to give evil thoughts admission, and by prayer and righteous meditations drive them from our door, we shall soon be free from them.

The surest way of bolting the door against evil thoughts is to fill the mind with meditations that are pure and good. An empty mind is not only a constant invitation to evil thoughts to enter in and take possession, but the mind will prey upon itself and generate evil thoughts just because it is empty. When I was a boy over in the Oregon hills I used to know an old man who had had charge of the little flour mill in the neighborhood for a great many years, and he had so trained himself that he could fill up the hopper with wheat and then go to bed and drop fast asleep and sleep soundly so long as there was any grain between the burrs of the mill; but the moment it ran empty he jumped to his feet, wide-awake, and hastened to put in more grain lest the millstones accustomed to crushing the wheat should grind upon themselves. The human mind is like that. It is a mill that needs to be grinding on good thoughts and pure imaginations, devising plans for heroic and noble achievement, and the best way in the world to make sure that evil thoughts will not find a lodgment in your heart is to keep yourself full of earnest plans for good living.

But perhaps some one says: "Your advice is good enough if it had come to me years ago, but my heart is already the haunt of evil thoughts. When I say to myself, 'I will be good,' evil imaginations possess my mind, and unholy but fascinating pictures lure me from that which I know to be right. My thoughts seem to me like a river that is muddy and turbid, and swollen like a mountain stream in the springtime, and all its floods are black with evil insinuations and soiled meditations. My heart is

malicious and full of anger and longs for revenge, or my thoughts are impure and wrongful desires fascinate me. I try to stop the thoughts, I try to hurl back the revengeful feelings in my heart, but it is as if I were to try to dam up the course of a turbulent swollen stream; I hold it in check for a while only to see it burst through all obstacles and sweep on more desperately than ever." The truth of that picture is illustrated on every hand. The flood of evil thought cannot be stopped by damming up the stream. The only way open to us is the cleansing of the fountain. When the Hebrews came to Marah they found the water very bitter, and they could not drink it, but God showed them a tree the branches of which had the power to make the waters sweet. So many a man's heart is filled with a stream of bitter thoughts that can only be sweetened by the grace and mercy of God. This is the superiority of Jesus Christ over all the world's philosophers. He cleanses the stream of man's thinking and doing by purifying the fountain from whence thoughts and actions spring. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." It is the glory of our Christianity that it gives to those who accept it in sincerity a new heart. Let him who is troubled and annoyed by impure and wicked thoughts pray the prayer of the psalmist, "Create within me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."

It is also worth our while to notice the delightful character of those things which Paul urges us to think about: "Rejoice in the Lord alway: again I will say, Rejoice. Let your forbearance be known

unto all men. The Lord is at hand. In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." If we shall take Paul at his word and by the help of God get the mastery over our thoughts, it will add greatly to our joy and peace. I remember visiting a sick man once who, through a long illness, came to the gateway of death in joy and victory; and he used to tell me how, during the long hours of the night when he could not sleep, he got victory over the pain and rose above it by delightful meditations on the goodness and love of God and on the promises which he has given in his word of the final triumph of those who trust him. And as he told me this I thought how much sorrow the saints of God would escape if they should harness up their thoughts to cartloads of divine promises, rather than hitch them to their own fears.

How much unnecessary sorrow we endure! The Bible history is full of such illustrations. When Jacob's guilty sons brought the bloody coat of Joseph to their father the poor old man cried out, "It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him, Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces." Twenty years later the same sons came back from Egypt with

their load of corn and told Jacob that Joseph was governor over all the land of Egypt. It seemed to Jacob for a long time too good to be true; but when he saw the wagons he believed, and said, "It is enough; Joseph is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die." He went, and most affecting was the meeting. The record quaintly says, "Jacob fell on the neck of Joseph, and wept on his neck a good while." And when Jacob came near to the end Joseph went out to Goshen to see him, taking with him his two sons. And when Jacob saw them he said unto Joseph, "Who are these?" And Joseph said unto his father, "These are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place." And Jacob said unto Joseph, "I had not thought to see thy face, and lo, God hath showed me also thy seed." How much better God had dealt with him than his fears.

It was so with David. Notwithstanding all the promises of God and the assurance of his divine anointing by the prophet, there was a time when Saul was hunting him like a partridge upon the mountains that David lost heart and said, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul." But, instead, Saul was overthrown, and David saw the glory of the kingdom as it had never been witnessed before.

When the Marys were coming to Joseph's tomb in the garden to anoint the body of Jesus they wondered anxiously among themselves and said, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?" But when they had reached the place the stone was rolled away, and the angel from heaven was there to welcome them. So it is usually with

the people of God; the Lord is better to them than their fears.

Instead of permitting our thoughts to go roving about, loading up every cowardly imagination, let us fill up the express wagon of life with promises like this: "All things work together for good to them that love God;" or this, "Which hope we have as an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast;" or this, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee;" or, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory through Christ Jesus." Why, brother, you can load up your wagon with every good thing you can conceive or think, with anything you can imagine that is good enough to be true, and then draw on as a wagon sheet over the top of the load this waterproof assurance, "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

And if there be a lone wanderer, whose heart has been long the prey of evil thoughts, and you look into your heart chamber with regret and sorrow and shame, I have a tender message for you. It is the divine Christ who said it: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Louise Hodgkins sings a glad song of testimony that may have in it your experience if you will yield to the Lord's entreaty. She says:

"With transient pleasures all my life was filled,
In careless glee I followed their behest,
Yet not a moment had I dreamed or willed
To be unready for my coming Guest;

"A Guest who left this message long ago,
'For if I go, I will return to thee.'
Full often had I softly whispered low,
'Some happy day he surely comes to me.'

"At last his messenger was at my door,
'The Master saith,' he cried with eager face,
'"Where is the guest chamber?" I run before,
To say he bides with thee, and comes apace.'

"In blushing shame I turned the rusty key,
In anxious fear I peered into its gloom;
Too late I feared what hidden there might be.
Ah, would that it had been an empty room!

"Forgotten vows in cobweb lightness spun,
Forbade the entrance of the shining sky;
Vain, spent desires, past duties left undone,
Blocked every footstep of my onward way.

"I heard his footfall at my very side,
In joy and grief I stood irresolute,
Then turned and threw my portal open wide
To him who stood before it, grieved and mute.

"'Come to my cheerless home, O Friend divine!
I have no welcome but my tears,' I said,
'Again it shall not fall, through fault of mine,
My Master hath not where to lay his head.'

"Was it my one repentant act and thought?
Was it his swift, transmuting touch of light?
Before my eyes this marvel had been wrought,
And lo! my room was radiant, fair, and white."

XXVII.

The Heart Ruling the Hand.

"A wise man's heart is at his right hand; but a fool's heart at his left."—Eccles. x, 2.

THE heart is the supreme motor in human conduct. The heart is so far the first in the race for supremacy that the head is a very slow second. Solomon, the wisest man of the ages, so far as human understanding goes, lays more stress on the heart than any other personage in the Bible save Christ. He declares again and again that the heart is the real spring and source of human action. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he;" and again, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

When one is at sea on an ocean steamer he instinctively listens for the throbbing of the engine. The passenger goes to sleep comforted at night because of that steady pulsation that tells him the ship is alive and, like a conscious breathing thing, is carrying him onward to his destination. If he wakes in the night the first thought goes to the engine, and if the ship trembles with its great heart-throb he turns over with a sigh of content. All is well, and the ship is cutting its way across the trackless sea. But if on awakening the engine is still, there is alarm in a moment. That silence is terribly ominous. I was on a steamer once when it meant almost a panic. We had had an unusually long

voyage, and off the coast five hundred miles from New York the ship stopped at night to take on a pilot. Some of the passengers, being aroused, and not hearing the engine, were alarmed, and rushed out into the cabins, and this alarmed others, until half the passengers on board were in a condition of wild excitement before the facts of the situation became known.

As the engine is important to the ship, so the heart is important to the human life. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of having a good heart. I fear that very many people underestimate the danger of cherishing in their hearts thoughts and imaginations which they would not for the world have transmuted into actions in their daily lives. It is not a light thing to cherish and caress in one's inner soul that which, if allowed to develop, means sin and ruin. Yet many people seem not to regard any danger signal that has not already flaunted its flag of disgrace in their outward conduct. President Stryker, of Hamilton College, told this story recently in an after-dinner address as illustrating the braggart spirit. Some little schoolgirls were discussing their clothes. "I've a lovely new dress," said one, "and I'm going to wear it to church next Sunday." "Pooh!" said another. "I've a new hat, and I'm going to wear it every day." "Well," said a third, "I've got a heart disease, anyway!" I fear there are many people who regard a heart disease, in the higher sense, as some light matter, much as they would a question of taste or opinion. But the wise man of old declares that out of that heart "are the issues of life."

We live in an artificial age, when there is a vast deal of hypocrisy in the social and business and political fictions in common use, but it takes only a little touch of real heart to expose their shallowness. A group of girl clerks in a large dry-goods store were laughing and talking together when there came down the aisle a small, gray-bearded old man, evidently from the country. He looked around him with eager interest as he came down the aisle, and the girls began whispering and tittering together.

"Grandfather Hayseed," one of them said, derisively.

"Ask him how his crops are coming on," said another.

"Guess I'll see if he has any butter and eggs to sell," said a third, when a fourth added, "I suppose he wants a yard and three-fifths of 'caliker,' and will expect us to take pay for it in garden stuff."

Approaching the counter, the old man bought several small articles, the girl who waited on him exchanging sly glances with her companions as they still continued whispering and laughing together. The old man carried in one hand a small, neatly made basket, the lid tied down with a bit of blue ribbon. While waiting for his change he lifted the basket to the counter and said: "'Scuse me, miss, but I've got something here I'd like to give you, if you'd take it and divide it 'round 'mong these other young ladies here. You see, I've got a little girl to home 'bout your age, but she can't walk nor caper 'round like other girls. Had a fall when she was little, and the doctors say she'll never walk now, but she is just as cheerful and happy as those who

can walk and be strong, never complainin' nor nothin.' She made this basket herself, makes lots of 'em, and every time I come to town she has me bring one of 'em full o' something to give to somebody that don't know what the country's like. Now this basket is full of the first that's ripened of our airly August red apples, and some little posy bouquets she fixed up herself. It jest came across me that mebbe you'd like 'em, and you're welcome to 'em. We live about forty miles out, half a mile from F ——, and I'd be glad to have you all come out and stay over Sunday any time. Here's the basket."

The girl accepted it with a sober "Thank you" and walked toward her companions as the old man went on his way.

"Well, it was real kind of him, wasn't it?" she said.

"Yes, it was," replied one of the girls, heartily.

"He's a good old soul," said a third. "I feel guilty for laughing at him."

"So do I. What lovely apples! And here's six little bouquets of wild flowers his little crippled girl fixed up. See how she's made the apples shine. I could cry for making fun of her old father."

The faces of the girls wore a soberer look, and there was a mist about their eyes as they separated, each of them wearing their little bouquets, the gift of which had touched their better nature.

When you have once touched a human heart there are no impossible self-denials. All else is consecrated easily when the heart is really enlisted. There is so much cynical talk about the selfishness of humanity, and of the narrow greed with which men look

after their own interest, that we are often astonished at the uncovering of a deep heart-well of human sympathy where we did not dream that it existed.

A gentleman residing in Chicago got up at a club dinner to reply to some cynical remarks concerning the lack of disinterested sympathy, and related a recent experience of his own. He was in New York city on business, when he received a telegram announcing the serious sickness of his youngest daughter, a girl about six years old. She was the pet and the hope of the home. He took the first train west. On account of floods he was detained on the road two days. When he arrived he found that the life of his child hung in the balance and depended, not only on the physician's skill, but on constant attention. He carried her in his arms for two days and nights. She had been awake for fifty hours, and the precious life hung upon her getting a few hours' sleep. After consultation medical skill suggested an opiate. It was given, and he held her on his lap in order that she should get absolute quiet and rest. Just as she fell into slumber she was aroused by the cry on the street of a banana peddler. She was startled, and the physician's face showed too plainly that he regarded the case as hopeless. The father handed the child to the doctor and went into the street to speak to the peddler. He explained to him the condition of his child, and the man agreed not to cry his fruit any more in front of that house. He then asked him if he would use his influence to keep others away. Then he reflected that, to do this, the peddler must be a loser, and, knowing that his family support depended upon the

sale of his fruits, he proposed to him to act as a special policeman in front of his house until the situation in the sick room changed, the gentleman to pay him for his services. The banana man consented, and until the time when there was no further use for him he was as faithful as a watchdog. He warned off every huckster that came in sight, and his interest in the child's welfare grew to be as tender as it was touching. On the corner below was a newsboy from whom the gentleman had frequently bought papers. The banana man went to him and explained the condition of affairs in the home, and asked him to change his place and go elsewhere. That night the gentleman was informed that a boy wanted to see him at his door. On going there he found the newsboy in question. He had his hat in his hand. As soon as the father appeared to him he said in the most honest way: "I hear your gal's sick. I ain't got much, but here's all I've got, and it's for her." With this he thrust a greasy roll of paper into the man's hand, and before he could fully realize what he was up to he had gone. He examined the contents of the paper, and it contained that boy's earnings for his papers. He tried to overtake the boy, but he had gone. He left word for him to come back to the house. Several days passed, and the banana man, who was still on guard, reported that he had not seen the boy, and no one knew where he was. In the course of time the little girl recovered. And then the father instituted a search for the newsboy. It took him some time to find him, and when the boy saw him coming he scampered away. He finally got hold of him and ex-

plained to him that the little one was well and that he must take back the money he had given him. He was at first reluctant to do so, but finally consented. "Is the gal well?" he asked, "and don't she need nothin'?" The father told him she needed nothing, and that he could come back to his old quarters. "I would do anything for a sick gal," he said, as he looked up at the man, with his great honest eyes like open windows into his generous heart. "I have read a good deal about sympathy," said the gentleman relating the incident, "I have heard and read a good deal in the way of eulogy, but I never heard anything as eloquent as that boy's sentiment for the 'sick gal,' and I never saw anything as tender as the solicitude of the fruit peddler. This world, gentlemen," he concluded, "is full of tender chords, and there are always hands to play upon them, and what sweet music they make!"

When the story was finished several strong men got up, one after another, walked over to the windows, and stood looking out silently. But they were not trying to see anything. The speaker had unconsciously touched the chords of which he had spoken.

Christ points out one of the great characteristics of a good heart to be its singleness—one that is sincere and straightforward, seeking to accomplish right results, from right motives, in right ways. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit," is the declaration of the Master. He assures us that we might as well expect to gather grapes of thorns, or figs of

thistles, as to have a righteous cause pushed forward to victory by a bad heart. A bad heart cannot help on the cause of righteousness, because it is "left-handed," to use the figure of our text, at such work. As a man's right hand is usually the one that is skilled in the use of the tools by which he carries on the vocations of daily life, whether it be the lever, or the saw, or the hammer, or the pen, or the needle, so a good heart is skillful in the performance of duty. It is at the right hand. But a bad heart is left-handed in doing duty. And you are not more awkward when you try to sew, or write, or use a hammer with your untrained left hand, than is a bad heart which, unchanged, seeks to perform the duties which God demands of us.

A good heart rejoices in spiritual truth. It finds precious nourishment in the Bible. A flower garden is not more attractive to a bee that is seeking after honey than is the Bible to a good heart that is in harmony with God and sure of its own purpose to please him. The place of prayer is precious to the heart that rejoices in the confidence that God is its portion as well as its stronghold forever. An old Christian relates that he was once much helped by Bishop Hamline, who visited his home when he was a little boy, and who, taking him aside, impressively said: "When in trouble, my boy, kneel down and ask God's help; but never climb over the fence into the devil's ground and then kneel down and ask help. Pray from God's side of the fence."

A good heart rejoices in spiritual conversation,

and also in meditation upon the words of God; rejoices not only in the promises but in the commandments of God's word. There are many, many people who are able to echo the words of the psalmist, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

A good heart lightens our daily toil. It makes hard burdens easier. Paul took all the shame and disgrace out of the scars which he had as mementos of his fights with wild beasts while a prisoner by counting them as the badges of his loyalty to Christ. What a splendid note of triumph there is in these words, "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus!" And the dungeon was brightened up with an illumination more splendid than any modern electrical device could have brought about when he was able from the depths of his heart to call himself, not the prisoner of Nero, but "the prisoner of Jesus Christ." So we, if out of "a pure heart, fervently," we are serving Christ, in our narrow place, may be able to point to our scars, won in the daily struggle of ordinary life, as badges of our fidelity to Jesus.

A woman whose life has been long and checkered with many reverses said lately: "Nothing has given me more courage to face every day's duties and troubles than a few words spoken to me by my father when I was a child. He was the village doctor. I came into his office when he was compounding medicine, one day, looking cross and ready to cry.

"'What is the matter, Mary?' he said.

"'I am tired. I've been making beds and washing dishes all day, and what good does it do? To-

morrow the beds will have to be made and the dishes washed over again.'

"'Look, my child,' he said; 'do you see these little empty vials? They are all insignificant, cheap things, of no value in themselves; but in one I put a deadly poison, in another a sweet perfume, in a third a healing medicine. Nobody cares for the vials; it is that which they contain that gives them value. Your daily work, the dishes washed, or the floor swept are homely things, and count for little in themselves; but it is the sweet patience, or zeal, or high thoughts that you put into your work that shall last. These make our life.'"

Are there not many of us who may lift our lives out of the dust into a clearer and more joyous atmosphere by applying that principle to ourselves?

A good heart gives strong courage in trying hours. It was that that made it possible for Moses to deny himself the joys and riches of the Egyptian court, and lay down the most promising prospect that any young man had in the world at his time, and go a lonely exile in the desert, and, without murmuring, toil as a common sheep-herder for forty years before the divine call came to higher labor. It was the same good heart that gave him courage to face Pharaoh the oppressor, and in the very palace of the tyrant to demand the liberation of his people. It was the courage of a good heart that strengthened Elijah on Mount Carmel and made him more than a match for the four hundred prophets of Baal. Thank God, a pure heart with its clear conscience, is still as brave as a lion! Of the late Martha G. Kimball, who first suggested Decora-

tion Day, George W. Childs once remarked: "She has done more good deeds and said more kind words than any woman I have ever known." But gentle as she was, no man was braver when courage was demanded in a good cause. After the battle of Winchester, General Sheridan, riding up to the front and noting the demoralized condition of Mollineaux's command, sharply reproved that officer before his men. Mrs. Kimball had nursed General Mollineaux after he had been wounded in a previous battle in the performance of a brave duty, and knowing the injustice of General Sheridan's reproof she went to him and said, "You have done a great wrong to a brave man." With characteristic gallantry Sheridan replied, "Madam, if I have done so I will apologize to him before the soldiers;" and he did that, and more, recommending Mollineaux for a major generalship, which was promptly awarded him.

A good heart will make it possible for us to trust God, though for the time the clouds lower about us and the fog shuts us in so that we cannot read the divine purpose. Like Job we shall be able to say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." The heart thus stanch in its integrity can sing in perfect confidence:

"I will not doubt, though all my ships at sea
Come drifting home, with broken masts and sails
I will believe the Hand which never fails,
From seeming evil, worketh good for me;
And, though I weep because those sails are tattered,
Still will I cry, while my best hopes lie shattered,
'I trust in Thee.'

"I will not doubt, though all my prayers return
Unanswered from the still white realm above;
I will believe it is an all-wise love
Which has refused these things for which I yearn;
And, though at times I cannot keep from grieving,
Yet the pure ardor of my fixed believing
Undimmed shall burn.

"I will not doubt, though sorrows fall like rain,
And troubles swarm like bees about to hive;
I will believe the heights for which I strive
Are only reached by anguish and by pain;
And though I groan and writhe beneath my crosses,
I yet shall see through my severest losses
The greater gain.

"I will not doubt. Well anchored in this faith,
Like some stanch ship, my soul braves every gale,
So strong its courage will not quail
To breast the mighty unknown sea of death.
O, may I cry, though body parts with spirit,
'I do not doubt,' so listening worlds may hear it
With my last breath!"

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